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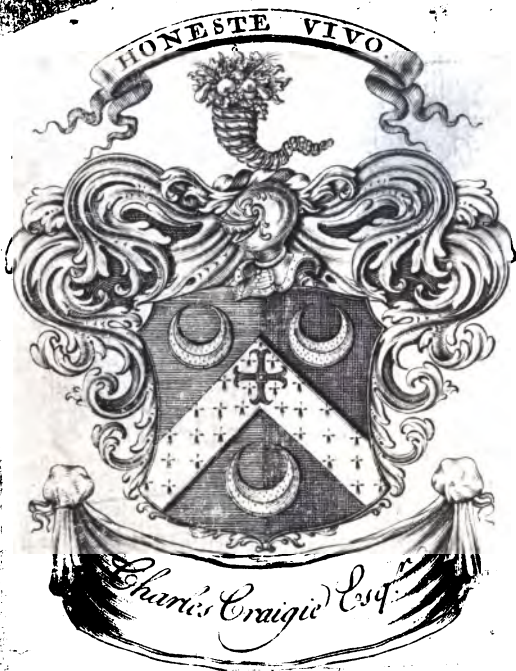
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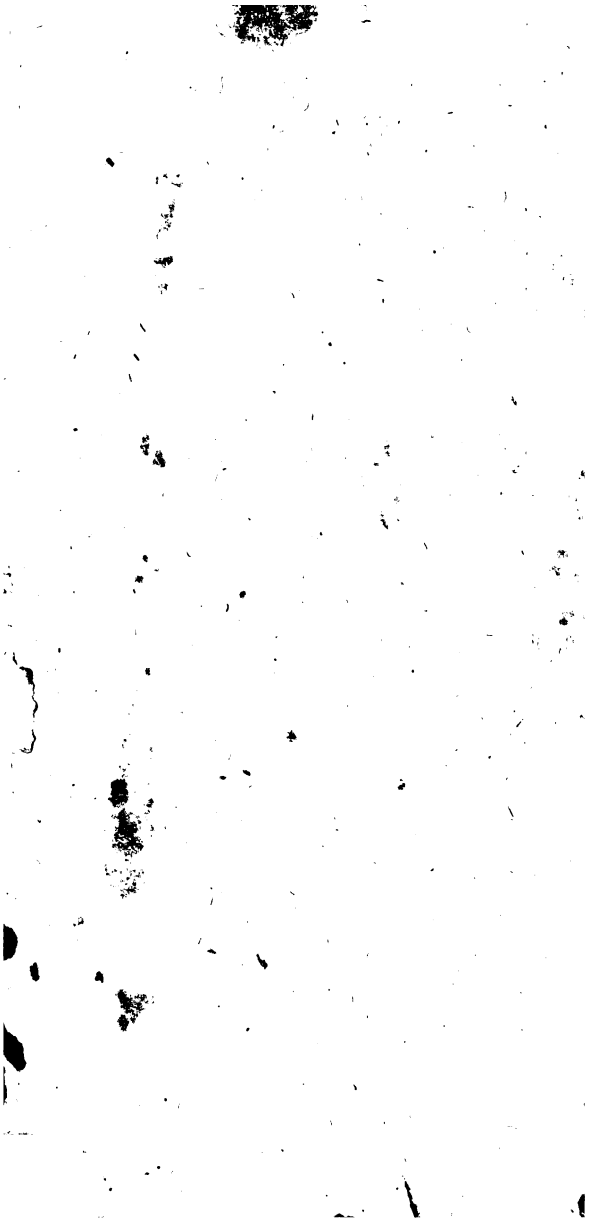
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THE
HISTORY
OF

Miss *Betsy Thoughtless*,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

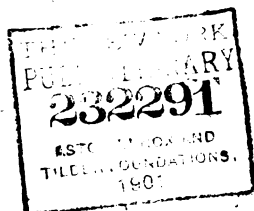
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T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
M I S S B E T S Y T H O U G H T L E S S.

C H A P. I.

*Gives the reader room to guess at what
is to ensue, tho' ten to one but he finds
himself deceived.*



I was always my opinion,
that fewer women were un-
done by love, than vanity,
and that those mistakes the
sex are sometimes guilty of,
proceed, for the most part,
rather from inadvertency, than a vicious in-
clination. The ladies, however, I am sorry
to observe, are apt to make too little al-
lowances to each other on this score, and

seem better pleased with an occasion to condemn, than to excuse; and it is not above one, in a greater number than I will presume to mention, who, while she passes the severest censure on the conduct of her friend, will be at the trouble of taking a retrospect on her own. There are some who behold, with indignation and contempt, those errors in others, which, unhappily, they are every day falling into themselves; and as want of a due consideration occasions the guilt, so the want of a due consideration also occasions the scandal: and there would be much less room either for the one or the other, were some part of that time, which is wasted at the toilet, in consulting what dress is most becoming to the face, employed in examining the heart, and what actions are most becoming of the character

Betsy Thoughtless was the only daughter of a gentleman of good family and fortune in L———e, where he constantly resided, scarce ever going to London, and contented himself with such diversions as the country afforded. On the death of his wife, he sent this little favourite, then about ten years old, to a boarding-school, the governess of which had the reputation of a woman of great good sense, fine breeding, and every way qualified for the well forming of
th

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 3

the minds of those young persons who were entrusted to her care.

The old gentleman was so well pleased with having placed his daughter where she was so likely to improve in all the accomplishments befitting her sex, that he never suffered her to come home, even at breaking-up times, when most of the other young ladies did so; but as the school was not above seven or eight miles from his seat, he seldom failed calling to see her once or twice a week.

Miss Betsy, who had a great deal of good-nature, and somewhat extremely engaging in her manner of behaviour, soon gained the affection not only of the governess, but of all the young ladies; but as girls, as well as women, have their particular favourites, to whom they may communicate their little secrets, there was one, who above all the others was distinguished by her. Miss Forward, for so she was called, was also very fond of miss Betsy. This intimacy beginning but in trivial things, and such as suited their age, continued as they advanced nearer to maturity. Miss Forward, however, had two years the advantage of her friend, yet did not disdain to make her the confidante of a kind of amorous intrigue she had entered into with a young
lad,

lad, called master Sparkish, the son of neighbouring gentleman: he had fallen in love with her at church, and had taken all opportunities to convince her of his passion: — she, proud of being looked upon as a woman, encouraged it. — Frequent letters passed between them; for she never failed to answer those she received from him, both which were shewn to miss Betsey, and this gave her an early light into the art and mystery of courtship, and, consequently, a relish for admiration. The young lover calling his mistress angel and goddess, made her long to be in her teens, that she might have the same fine things said of her.

This correspondence being, by some accident, discovered, the governess found it behoved her to keep a strict eye upon miss Forward; all the servants were examined concerning the conveying any letters, either to or from her; but none of them knew any thing of the matter: it was a secret to all but miss Betsey, who kept it inviolably. It is fit, however, the reader should not remain in ignorance.

Master Sparkish had read the story of Píramus and Thisbe; — he told his mistress of it, and in imitation of those lovers of antiquity, stuck his letters into a little crevice he found in the garden wall, whence she pulled

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 5

pulled them out every day, and returned her answers by the same friendly breach, which he very gallantly told her in one of his epistles, had been made by the god of love himself, in order to favour his suit; — so that all the governess's circumspection could not hinder this amour from going on without interruption; and could they have contented themselves with barely writing to each other, they might, probably, have done so till they both had been weary; but tho' I will not pretend to say, that either of them had any thing in their inclinations that was not perfectly consistent with innocence, yet, it is certain, they both languished for a nearer conversation, which the fertile brain of miss Forward at last brought about.

She pretended one Sunday, in the afternoon, to have so violent a pain in her head, that she could not go to church: miss Betsy begged leave to stay and keep her company, and told the governess she would read a sermon, or some other good book, to her; the good old gentlewoman, little suspecting the plot concerted between them, readily consented.

No body being left in the house but themselves, and one maid-servant, young Starkish, who had previous notice at what hour to come, was let in at the garden

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door, the key being always in it. Miss Betsey left the lovers in an arbour, and went into the kitchen, telling the maid, she had read miss Forward to sleep, and hoped she would be better when she waked. She amused the wench with one little chat or other, till she thought divine service was near over, then returned into the garden to give her friends warning it was time to separate.

They had after this many private interviews, thro' the contrivance and assistance of miss Betsey, who, quite charmed with being made the confidante of a person elder than herself, set all her wits to work, to render herself worthy of the trust reposed in her. Sometimes she made pretences of going to the milliner, the mantua-maker, or to buy something in town, and begged leave, that miss Forward should accompany her, saying, she wanted her choice of what she was to purchase. Sparkish was always made acquainted when they were to go out, and never failed to give them the meeting.

Miss Forward had a great deal of the coquette in her nature: — she knew how to play at fast-and-loose with her lover; and, young as she was, took a pride in mingling pain with the pleasure she bestowed.

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 7

stowed. Miss Betsy was a witness of all the airs the other gave herself on this occasion, and the artifices she made use of, in order to secure the continuance of his addresses; so that thus early initiated into the mystery of courtship, it is not to be wondered at, that when she came to the practice, she was so little at a loss.

This intercourse, however, lasted but a small time; — their meetings were too frequent, and too little circumspection used in them, not to be liable to discovery. The governess was informed, that in spite of all her care, the young folks had been too cunning for her; on which she went to the father of Sparkish, acquainted him with what she knew of the affair, and intreated he would lay his commands on his son to refrain all conversation with any of the ladies under her tuition. The old gentleman flew into a violent passion, at hearing his son had already begun to think of love; — he called for him, and after having rated his youthful folly in the severest manner, charged him to relate the whole truth of what had passed between him and the young lady mentioned by the governess. The poor lad was terrified beyond measure at his father's anger, and confessed every particular of his meetings with Miss Forward, and her companion; and

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thus miss Betsy's share of the contrivance was brought to light, and drew on her a reprimand equally severe with that miss Forward had received. - The careful governess would not entirely depend on the assurances the father of Sparkish had given her, and resolved to trust neither of the ladies out of her sight, while that young gentleman remained so near them, which she knew would be but a short time, he having finished his school-learning, and was soon to go to the university. To prevent, also, any future stratagems being laid between miss Betsy and miss Forward, she took care to keep them from ever being alone together, which was a very great mortification to them; but a sudden turn soon after happened in the affairs of miss Betsy, which put all I have been relating entirely out of her head.



CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Shews miss Betsy in a new scene of life, and the frequent opportunities she had of putting in practice those lessons she was beginning to receive from her young instructress at the boarding-school.

THO' it is certainly necessary to inculcate into young girls all imaginable precaution, in regard to their behaviour towards those of another sex, yet I know not if it is not an error to dwell too much upon that topic. Miss Betsy might, possibly, have sooner forgot the little artifices she had seen practised by miss Forward, if her governess, by too strenuously endeavouring to convince her how unbecoming they were, had not reminded her of them. Besides, the good old gentleman was far stricken in years; — time had set his iron fingers on her cheeks, — had left his cruel marks on every feature of the face, and she had little remains of having ever been capable of exciting those inclinations she so much condemned; — so that what she said seemed to miss Betsy as spoke out of envy, or to shew her authority,

ro *The* HISTORY of
thority, rather than the real dictates of
truth.

I have often remarked, that reproofs from the old and ugly have much less efficacy than when given by persons less advanced in years, and who may be supposed not altogether past sensibility themselves of the gaieties they advise others to avoid.

Tho' all the old gentlewoman said could not persuade miss Betsy there was any harm in miss Forward's behaviour towards young Sparkish, yet she had the complaisance to listen to her with all the attention the other could expect, or desire from her.

She was, indeed, as yet too young to consider of the justice of the other's reasoning, and her future conduct shewed, also, she was not of a humour to give herself much pains in examining, or weighing in the balance of judgment, the merit of the arguments she heard urged, whether for or against any point whatsoever. She had a great deal of wit, but was too volatile for reflection, and as a ship, without sufficient ballast, is tost about at the pleasure of every wind that blows, so was she
huffed

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. II
hurried thro' the ocean of life, just as each predominant passion directed.

But I will not anticipate that gratification, which ought to be the reward of a long curiosity. The reader, if he has patience to go thro' the following pages, will see into the secret springs which set this fair machine in motion, and produced many actions, which were ascribed, by the ill-judging and malicious world, to causes very different from the real ones.

All this, I say, will be revealed in time ; but it would be as absurd in a writer to rush all at once into the catastrophe of the adventures he would relate, as it would be impracticable in a traveller to reach the end of a long journey, without sometimes stopping at the inns in his way to it. — To proceed therefore gradually with my history.

The father of miss Betsy was a very worthy, honest, and good-natured man, but somewhat too indolent ; and, by depending too much on the fidelity of those he entrusted with the management of his affairs, had been for several years involved in a law suit, and, to his misfortune, the aversion he had to business rendered him ~~incapable~~ incapable of extricating himself from

it, and the decision was spun out to a much greater length than it need to have been, could he have been prevailed upon to have attended in person the several courts of justice the cause had been carried thro', by his more industrious adversary. The exorbitant bills, however, which his lawyers were continually drawing upon him, joined with the pressing remonstrances of his friends, at last roused him from that inactivity of mind, which had already cost him so dear, and determined him not only to take a journey to London, but likewise not to return home, 'till he had seen a final end put to this perplexing affair.

Before his departure he went to the boarding-school, to take his leave of his beloved Betsy, and renew the charge he had frequently given the governess concerning her education; adding, in a mournful accent, that it would be a long time before he saw her again.

These words, as it proved, had somewhat of prophetic in them. On his arrival in London, he found his cause in so perplexed and entangled a situation, as gave him little hopes of ever bringing it to a favourable issue. The vexation and fatigue he underwent on this account, joined

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 13

ed with the closeness of the town air, which had never agreed with his constitution, even in his younger years, soon threw him into that sort of consumption, which goes by the name of a galloping one, and they say, is the most difficult of any to be removed. He died in about three months, without being able to do any great matters concerning the affair, which had drawn him from his peaceful home, and according to all probability hastened his fate. Being perfectly sensible, and convinced of his approaching dissolution, he made his will, bequeathing the bulk of his estate to him whose right it was, his eldest son, then upon his travels thro' the greatest part of Europe; all his personals, which were very considerable in the bank, and other public funds, he ordered should be equally divided between Francis his second son, at that time a student at Oxford, and miss Betsy; constituting, at the same time, as trustees to the said testament, sir Ralph Trusty, his near neighbour in the country, and mr. Goodman, a wealthy merchant in the city of London; both of them gentlemen of unquestionable integrity, and with whom he had preserved a long and uninterrupted friendship.

On

On the arrival of this melancholly news, miss Betfy felt as much grief as it was possible for a heart so young and gay as hers to be capable of; but a little time, for the most part, serves to obliterate the memory of misfortunes of this nature, even in persons of a riper age; and had miss Betfy been more afflicted than she was, something happened soon after, which would have very much contributed to her consolation.

Mr. Goodman having lived without marrying till he had reached an age, which one should have imagined would have prevented him from thinking of it at all, at last took it into his head to become a husband. The person he made choice of was called lady Mellasin, relict of a baronet, who having little or no estate, had accepted of a small employment about the court, in which post he died, leaving her ladyship one daughter, named Flora, in a very destitute condition. Goodman, however, had wealth enough for both, and consulted no other interest than that of his heart.

As for the lady, the motive on which she had consented to be his wife may easily be guessed; and when once made so,

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 15

so, gained such an absolute ascendancy over him, that whatever she declared as her will, with him had the force of a law. She had an aversion to the city, — he immediately took a house of her choosing at St. James's, inconvenient as it was for his business. Whatever servants she disapproved, tho' of never so long standing, and of the most approved fidelity, were discharged, and others, more agreeable to her, put in their places. In fine, nothing she desired was denied, — he considered her as an oracle of wit and wisdom, and thought it would be an unpardonable arrogance to attempt to set his reason against hers.

This lady was no sooner informed of the trust reposed in him, than she told him, she thought it would be highly proper for miss Betsy to be sent for from the school, and boarded with them, not only as her daughter would be a fine companion for that young orphan, they being much of the same age, and she herself was more capable of improving her mind, than any governess of a school could be supposed to be; but that also having her under his own eye, he would be more able to discharge his duty towards her as a guardian, than if she were at the distance of near an hundred miles.

There

There was something in this proposal which had indeed the face of a great deal of good-nature and consideration for miss Betfy, at least, it seemed highly so to mr. Goodman; but as sir Ralph Trusty was joined with him in the guardianship of that young beauty, and was at that time in London, he thought it proper to consult him on the occasion; which having done, and finding no objection on the part of the other, lady Mellasin, to shew her great complaisance to the daughter of her husband's deceased friend, sent her own woman to bring her from the boarding-school, and attend her up to London.

Miss Betfy had never seen this great metropolis; but had heard so much of the gay manner in which the genteel part of the world passed their time in it, that she was quite transported at being told she was to be removed thither. Mrs. Prinks (for so lady Mellasin's woman was called) did not fail to heighten her ideas of the pleasures of the place to which she was going, nor to magnify the goodness of her lady, in taking her under her care, with the most extravagant encomiums: it is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that neither the tears of the good governess, who truly loved her, nor those of her dear
miss

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 17

miss Forward, nor of any of those she left behind, could give any more than a momentary regret to a heart so possessed with the expectations of going to receive every thing with which youth is liable to be enchanted. She promised, however, to keep up a correspondence by letters, which she did, 'till things, that seemed to her of much more importance, put her L ——— e acquaintance entirely out of her head.

She was met at the inn, where the stage put up, by mr. Goodman in his own coach, accompanied by miss Flora : The good old gentleman embraced her with the utmost tenderness, and assured her that nothing in his power, or in that of his family, would be wanting to compensate as much as possible the loss she had sustained by the death of her parents. The young lady also said many obliging things to her, and they seemed highly taken with each other at this first interview, which gave the honest heart of Goodman an infinite satisfaction.

The reception given her by lady Mel-lasin when brought home, and presented to her by her husband, was conformable to what mrs. Prinks had made her expect, — that lady omitting nothing to make

make her certain of being always treated by her with the same affection as her own daughter.

Sir Ralph Trusty, on being informed his young charge was come to town, came the next day to Mr. Goodman's to visit her.—His lady accompanied him. There had been a great intimacy and friendship between her, and the mother of miss Betsey, and she could not hold in her arms the child of a person so dear to her, without letting fall some tears, which were looked upon, by the company, as the tribute due to the memory of the dead. The conjecture, in part, might be true, but the flow proceeded from the mixture of another motive, not suspected: — that of compassion for the living. This lady was a woman of great prudence, piety, and virtue;—she had heard many things relating to the conduct of lady Mellasin, which made her think her a very unfit person to have the care of youth, especially those of her own sex. She had been extremely troubled when Sir Ralph told her, that miss Betsey was sent for from the country, to live under such tuition, and would fain have opposed it, could she have done so without danger of creating a misunderstanding between him and Mr. Goodman, well knowing the bigotted respect

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 19

spect the latter had for his wife, and how unwilling he would be to do any thing, that had the least tendency to thwart her inclinations. She communicated her sentiments, however, on this occasion, to no person in the world, not even to her own husband ; but resolved, within herself, to take all the opportunities that fell in her way, of giving *Miss* Betsy such instructions as she thought necessary for her behaviour in general, and especially towards the family in which it was her lot to be placed.

Miss Betsy was now just entering into her fourteenth year, — a nice and delicate time, in persons of her sex ; since it is then they are most apt to take the bent of impression, which, according as it is well or ill directed, makes, or marring, the future prospect of their lives. She was tall, well shaped, and perfectly amiable, without being what is called a compleat beauty, and as she wanted nothing to render her liable to the greatest temptations, so she stood in need of the surest arms for her defence against them.

But while this worthy lady was full of cares, for the well doing of a young creature, who appeared so deserving of regard, *Miss* Betsy thought she had the highest reason to be satisfied with her situation, and
how,

how, indeed, could it be otherwise? — lady Mellasin kept a great deal of company; — she received visits every morning from ten to one o'clock, from the most gay and polite of both sexes; — all the news of the town was talked on at her levee, and it seldom happened that some party of pleasure was not formed for the ensuing evening, in all which miss Betsey and miss Flora had their share.

Never did the mistress of a private family indulge herself, and those about her, with such a continual round of publick diversions. The court, the play, the ball, and opera, with giving and receiving visits, engrossed all the time could be spared from the toilet. It cannot, therefore, seem strange, that miss Betsey, to whom all these things were entirely new, should have her head turned with the promiscuous enjoyment, and the very power of reflection lost amidst the giddy whirl, nor that it should be so long before she could recover it enough, to see the little true felicity of such a course of life.

Among the many topics, with which this brilliant society entertained each other, it may be easily supposed, that love and gallantry were not excluded. Lady Mellasin, tho' turned of forty, had her fine things

things said to her ; but both heaven and earth were ransack'd for comparisons in favour of the beauty of miss Flora and miss Betsy ; but as there was nothing particular in these kind of addresses, and intended only to shew the wit of those that made them, these young ladies answered them only with raillery, in which art miss Betsy soon learned to excel. — She had the glory, however, of being the first who excited a real passion in the heart of any of those who visited lady Mellasin ; tho' being accustomed to hear declarations, which had the appearance of love, yet were really no more than words of course, and made indiscriminately to every fine woman, she would not presently persuade herself, that this was more serious.

This first victim of her charms, was the only son of a very rich alderman, and having a fortune left him by a relation, independant of his father, who was the greatest miser in the world, was furnish'd with the means of mingling with the beau monde, and of making one at every diversion that was proposed.

He had fancied miss Flora a mighty fine creature, before he saw miss Betsy ; but the imaginary flame he had for her was soon converted into a sincere one
for

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for the other. He truly loved her, and was almost distracted at the little credit she gave to his professions. His perseverance, — his tremblings, whenever he approached her, — his transports on seeing her, — his anxieties at taking leave so different from what she had observed in any other of those who had pretended to lift themselves under the banner of charms, at length convincing her of the conquest she had made, awakened in her breast that vanity so natural to a youthful mind. • She exulted, — she plumed herself, — she used him ill and well in turns, taking an equal pleasure in raising or depressing his hopes, and, in spite of her good nature, felt no satisfaction superior to that of the consciousness of the power of giving pain to the man who loved her ; — but with how great a justification this short-liv'd triumph was attended, the reader shall presently be made sensible.



CHA

~~MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.~~

CHAP. III.

*Affords matter of condolance, or railery,
according to the humour the reader
happens to be in for either.*

WE often see, that the less encouragement is given to the lover's suit, with the more warmth and eagerness he prosecutes it; and many people are apt to ascribe this hopeless perseverance to an odd perverseness in the very nature of love; but, for my part, I rather take it to proceed from an ambition of surmounting difficulties: it is not, however, my province to enter into any discussion of so nice a point; — I deal only in matters of fact, and shall not meddle with definition.

It was not, till after miss Betsy had reason to believe she had engaged the heart of her lover too far for him to reel it, that she began to take a pride in mentioning him. While she looked on addresses as of a piece with those who addressed themselves her admirers, she had treated him in that manner which she would most conduce to make him really

really so ; but no sooner did she perceive by the tokens before-mentioned, and others, that his passion was of the serious nature, than she behaved in a fashion quite the reverse, especially before company ; for as she had at least affection, or even a liking to him, his submissive deportment uncommonly cold, sometimes contemptuous, could afford her no other satisfaction, than, as she fancied, it shewed the want of her beauty, and piqued those ladies of her acquaintance, who could not but be sensible of such an implicit resignation, and suffering from their lovers ; in particular Miss Flora, who she could not but imagining looked very grave on this occasion. What foundation there was for this conjecture of this nature was, never undiscoverable, 'till a long time after.

As this courtship was no secret of the family, Mr. Goodman thought himself obliged, both as the guardian of Betsy, and the friend of the alderman (for so the father of this young ensign was called) to enquire upon what it stood. He thought, that if the alderman knew and approved of his inclinations, he would have mentioned the affair to him, as they frequently did ; or, other, and it seemed to him, nei-

the interest, nor reputation of his fair charge, to receive the clandestine addresses of any man whatsoever. She had a handsome fortune of her own, and he thought that, and her personal accomplishments, sufficient to entitle her to as good a match as Mr. Saving; but then he knew the sordid nature of the alderman, and that all the merits of Miss Betsy would add nothing in the balance, if her money was found too light to poize against the sums his son would be possessed of. This being the case, he doubted not but that he was kept in ignorance of the young man's intentions, and fearing the matter might be carried too far, resolved either to put a stop to it at once, or permit it to go on, on such terms as should free him from all censure from the one or the other party.

On talking seriously to the lover, he soon found the suggestions he had entertained had not deceived him. Young Saving frankly confessed, that his father had other views for him; but added, that if he could prevail on the young lady to marry him, he did not despair but that when the thing was once done, and past recall, the alderman would, by degrees, receive them into favour. "You know," said he, "that he has no child of his own, nor any kindred for whom he

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" has

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“ has the least regard, and it cannot be
 “ supposed he would utterly discard me
 “ for following my inclinations in this
 “ point, especially as they are in favour of
 “ the most amiable and deserving of her
 “ sex.”

He said much more on this head, but it had no weight with the merchant : — he answered, that if the alderman was of his way of thinking, all the flattering hopes his passion suggested to him, on that score, might be realized ; but that, according to the disposition he knew him to be of, he saw but little room to think he would forgive a step of this kind : — “ Therefore,” continued he, “ I cannot allow
 “ this love-affair to be prosecuted any
 “ farther, and must desire you will desist
 “ visiting at my house, ’till you have
 “ either conquered this inclination, or
 “ miss Betsey is otherwise disposed of.

This was a cruel sentence for the truly affectionate Saving ; but he found it in vain to solicit a repeal of it, and all could obtain from him, was a promise to say nothing of what had passed to the alderman.

Mr. Goodman would have thought he had but half compleated his duty, had he
 ne-

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 27

neglected to sound the inclinations of miss Betsy on this account, and, in order to come more easily at the truth, he began with talking to her, in a manner which might make her look on him rather as a favourer of mr. Saving's pretensions than the contrary, and was extremely glad to find, by her replies, how indifferent that young lover was to her. He then acquainted her with the resolution he had taken, and the discourse he had just had with him: and, to keep her from ever after encouraging the addresses of any man, without being authorised by the consent of friends on both sides, represented, in the most pathetic terms he was able, the danger to which a private correspondence renders a young woman liable. She seemed convinced of the truth of what he said, and promised to follow, in the strictest manner, his advice.

Whether she thought herself, in reality, so much obliged to the conduct of her guardian in this, I will not take upon me to say; for tho' she was not charmed with the person of mr. Saving, it is certain she took an infinite pleasure in the assiduities of his passion: it is therefore highly probable, that she might imagine he meddled in this affair more than he had any occasion to have done. She had, however,

but little time for reflection on her guardian's behaviour, ~~an~~ accident happening, which shewed her own to her in a light very different from what she had ever seen it.

Lady Mellasin had a ball at her house: — there was a great deal of company, among whom was a gentleman, named Gayland: — He was a man of family, — had a large estate, — sung, danced, spoke French, and dressed well; — frequent successes among the women had rendered him extremely vain, and as he had too great an admiration for his own person to be possessed of any great share of it for that of any other, he enjoyed the pleasures of love, without being sensible of the pains. This darling of the fair it was, that miss Betsey picked out, to treat with the most peculiar marks of esteem, whenever she had a mind to give umbrage to poor Saving: much had that faithful lover suffered on the account of this fop; but the fair inflictor of his torments was punished for her insensibility and ingratitude, by a way her inexperience of the world, and the temper of mankind in general, had made her far from apprehending.

While the company were employed, some in dancing, and others in particular
con-

conversations; the beau found an opportunity to slip into miss Betsy's hand a little billet, saying to her, at the same time, "You have got my heart, and this little bit of paper will convey to you the sentiments it is inspired with in your favour." She imagining it was either a sonnet, or epistle, in praise of her beauty, received it with a smile, and put it into her pocket. After every body had taken leave, and she was retired to her chamber, she examined it, and found to her great astonishment the contents as follow :

" Dear Miss;

I MUST certainly be either the most ungrateful, or most consumedly dull fellow upon earth, not to have returned the advances you have been so kind to make me, had the least opportunity offered for my doing so; but lady Melanin, her daughter, the fool Saving, or some impertinent creature or other, has always been in the way, so that there was not a possibility of giving you even the least earnest of love; but, my dear, I have found out a way to pay you the whole sum with interest; — which is this: — You must invent some excuse for going out alone, and let me know by a billet directed for me at White's, the exact hour, and I will wait for you

“ at the corner of the street in a hack-
“ ney coach, — the window drawn up,
“ and whirl you to a pretty snug place I
“ know of, where we may pass a deli-
“ cious hour or two, without a soul to
“ interrupt our pleasures. Let me find
“ a line from you to-morrow, if you can
“ any way contrive it, being impatient
“ to convince you how much I am,

“ My dear creature,

“ Yours, &c. &c.

“ J. GAYLAND.”

Impossible is it to express the mingled emotions of shame, surprize, and indignation, which filled the breast of Miss Betsey, on reading this bold invitation: — she threw the letter on the ground, she stamped upon it, she spurned it, and would have treated the author in the same manner, had he been present; but the first transports of so just a resentment being over, a consciousness of having, by a too free behaviour towards him, emboldened him to take this liberty, involved her in the utmost confusion, and she was little less enraged with herself, than she had reason to be with him. She could have tore out her very eyes, for having affect-
ed

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 31

ed to look kindly on a wretch, who durst presume so far on her supposed affection, and tho' she spared those pretty twincklers that violence, she half drowned their lustre in a deluge of tears. Never was a night passed in more cruel anxieties than what she sustained, both from the affront she had received, and reflection, that it was chiefly the folly of her own conduct, which had brought it on her; and what greatly added to her vexation, was the uncertainty how it would best become her to act, on an occasion which appeared so extraordinary to her. She had no friend whom she thought it proper to consult; — she was ashamed to relate the story to any of the discreet and serious part of her acquaintance; — she feared their reproofs for having counterfeited a tenderness for a man, which she was now sensible she ought, if it had been real, rather to have concealed with the utmost care, both from him, and all the world: — and as for lady Mellasin and miss Flora, though their conduct inspired her not with any manner of awe, yet she thought she saw something in those ladies, which did not promise much sincerity, and shewed as if they would rather turn her complaints into ridicule, than afford her that cordial and friendly advice she stood in need of.

These were the reasons which determined her to keep the whole thing a secret from every one. At first she was tempted to write to Gayland, and testify her disdain of his presumption, in terms which should convince him how grossly his vanity had imposed upon him; but she afterwards considered, that a letter from her was doing him too much honour, and though never so reproachful, might draw another from him, either to excuse or beg pardon for the temerity of the former, or possibly to affront her a second time, by defending it, and repeating the request. She despised and hated him too much to engage in a correspondence with him of any kind, and therefore resolved as it was certainly most prudent, not to let him have any thing under her hand; but, when next she saw him, to shew her resentment by such ways as occasion should permit.

He came not to Mr. Goodman's, however, for three days, possibly waiting time for a letter from Miss Betsy; but the fourth he appeared at Lady Mellasi's tea-table. There were, besides the family several others present, so that he had an opportunity of speaking in private to Miss Betsy; but the looks she gave him

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so different from all he had ever seen her assume towards him, might have shewn any man, not blinded with his vanity, how much she was offended; but he imagining her ill-humour proceeded only from the want of means to send to him, came again the next day, and happening to find her alone in the parlour, "What, " my dear," said he, taking her in a free manner by the hand, "have you been so " closely watched by your guardian and " guardianesses here, that no kind moment offered for you to answer the devours of your humble servant?" "The " surest guardians of my fame and peace," replied she, snatching her hand away, "is " the little share of understanding I am " mistress of, which, I hope, will always " be sufficient to defend my honour in " more dangerous attacks, than the rude " impertinencies of an idle coxcomb."

These words, and the air with which they were spoke, one would think, should have struck with confusion the person to whom they were directed; but Gayland was not so easily put out of countenance, and looking her full in the face, — Ah, "Child!" cried he, "sure you are not " in your right senses to-day: — understanding, — impertinencies, — idle coxcomb, — very pleasant i'faith! but upon

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“ my soul, if you think these airs become
 “ you, you are the most mistaken woman
 “ in the world.” “ It may be so,” cried
 she, ready to burst with inward spite at
 his insolence, “ but I should be yet more
 “ mistaken, if I were capable of thinking
 “ a wretch, like you, worthy of any thing
 “ but contempt.” With these words she
 flung out of the room, and he pursued
 her with a horse-laugh, till she was out of
 hearing, and then went into the dining-
 room, where he found lady Mellasin, and
 several who had come to visit her.

Miss Betsey, who had gone directly to
 her own chamber, sent to excuse coming
 down to tea, pretending a violent head-
 ach; nor would be prevailed upon to join
 the company, ’till she heard Gayland had
 taken his leave, which he did much sooner
 than usual, being probably a good deal
 disconcerted at the shock his vanity had
 received.



CHAP.

~~OUR STORY CONTAINS NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH~~

CHAP IV.

Verifies the old proverb, that one affliction treads upon the heels of another.

AS Miss Betsy was prevented from discovering to any one, the impudent attempt Gayland had made on her virtue, by the shame of having emboldened him to it, by too unreserved a behaviour, so also the shame of the disappointment, and rebuff he had received from her, kept him from saying any thing of what had passed between them; and this resolution, on both sides, rendered it very difficult for either of them to carry to the other, so as not to give some suspicion. Betsy could not always avoid seeing him, when he came to lady Mellasin's, for he would not all at once desist his visit, for two reasons: first, because it might give occasion for an enquiry into the cause; and secondly, because Miss Betsy would plume herself on the occasion, as having, by her scorn, triumphed over his audacity, and drove him from the field of battle. He therefore resolved to continue his visits for some time, and to pique her, as he imagined, directed all the fine things his com-

mon-place-book was well stored with, to miss Flora, leaving the other wholly neglected.

But here he was little less deceived, than he had been before in the sentiments of that young lady : the hatred his late behaviour had given her, and the utter detestation it had excited in her towards him, had, for a time, extinguished that vanity, so almost inseparable from youth, especially when accompanied with beauty ; and she rather rejoiced, than the contrary, to see him affect to be so much taken up with miss Flora, that he could scarce say the least complaisant thing to her, as it freed her from the necessity of returning it, in some measure. Her good sense had now scope to operate ; — she saw, as in a mirror, her own late follies in those of miss Flora, who swelled with all the pride of flattered vanity, on this new imaginary conquest over the heart of the accomplished Gayland, as he was generally esteemed, and perceived the errors of such a way of thinking and acting, in so clear a light, as had it continued, would, doubtless, have spared her those anxieties her relapse from it afterwards occasioned.

In these serious reflections let us leave her, for a time, to see in what situation
mr.

Mr. Saving was, after being denied access to his mistress. As it was impossible for a heart to be more truly sincere and affectionate, he was far from being able to make any efforts for the banishing Miss Betsy's image thence: on the contrary, he thought of nothing but how to continue a correspondence with her, and endeavour, by all the means in his power, to engage her to a private interview. As his flame was pure and respectful, he was some days debating within himself how to proceed, so as not to let her think he had desisted from his pretensions, or to continue them in a manner at which she should not be offended. Love, when real, seldom fails of inspiring the breast that harbours it with an equal share of timidity: — he trembled whenever he thought of soliciting a meeting, yet, without it, how could he hope to retain any place in her memory, much less make any progress in gaining her affection! at length, however, he assumed courage enough to write to her, and, by a bribe to one of the servants, got his letter delivered to her, fearing if he sent it by the post, or any public way to the house, it would be intercepted, by the caution he found Mr. Goodman had resolved to observe in this point.

Miss

Miss Betfy, knowing his hand by the superscription, was a little surprized, as, perhaps, having never thought of him since they parted, but opened it without the least emotion, either of pain or pleasure: — she knew him too well to be under any apprehensions of being treated by him as she had been by Gayland, and was too little sensible of his merits to feel the least impatience for examining the dictates of his affection; yet, indifferent as she was, she could not forbear being touched on reading these lines:

“ Most adored of your sex,

“ I DOUBT not but you are acquainted
 “ with mr. Goodman’s behaviour to me;
 “ but oh! I fear, you are too insensible
 “ of the agonies, in which my soul labours,
 “ through his cruel caution. —
 “ Dreadful is the loss of sight, yet what
 “ is sight to me, when it presents not
 “ you! — Though I saw you regardless of
 “ my ardent passion, yet still I saw you,
 “ and while I did so, could not be wholly
 “ wretched. — What have I not endured
 “ since deprived of that only joy, for
 “ which I wish to live! — Had it not
 “ been improper for me to have been
 “ seen near mr. Goodman’s house, after
 “ having been forbid entrance to it,
 “ I should

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“ should have dwelt for ever in your
“ street, in hope of sometimes getting a
“ glimpse of you from one or other of
“ the windows; this I thought would
“ be taken notice of, and might offend
“ you : — But darkness freed me from
“ these apprehensions, and gave me the
“ consolation of breathing in the same
“ air with you. — Soon as I thought all
“ watchful eyes were closed, I flew to the
“ place, which, where-ever my body is,
“ contains my heart, and all its facul-
“ ties. I pleased myself with looking on
“ the roof that covers you, and invoked
“ every star to present me to you in your
“ sleep, in a form more agreeable than I
“ can hope I ever appeared in to your
“ waking fancy. Thus have I passed each
“ night, and when the morning dawned,
“ unwillingly retired to take that rest,
“ which nature more especially demands,
“ when heavy melancholly oppresses the
“ heart. I slept, — but how ? — distract-
“ ing images swam in my tormented
“ brain, and waked me with horrors in-
“ conceivable. Equally lost to business,
“ as to all social commerce, I fly man-
“ kind, and like some discontented ghost
“ seek out the most solitary walks, and
“ lonely shades, to pour forth my com-
“ plaints. O miss Betsy ! I cannot live,
“ if longer denied the sight of you ! —
“ In

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“ In pity to my sufferings, permit me
 “ yet once more to speak to you, even
 “ tho’ it be to take a last farewell. I
 “ have made a little kind of interest with
 “ the woman at the habit-shop, in Covent-
 “ garden, where I know you sometimes
 “ go : — I dread to intreat you would
 “ call there to-morrow, yet if you are so
 “ divinely good, be assured I shall enter-
 “ tain no presuming hopes on the conde-
 “ scension you shall be pleased to make
 “ me ; but acknowledge it as the meer
 “ effect of that compassion, which is in-
 “ herent to a generous mind. Alas ! I
 “ must be much more worthy than I can
 “ yet pretend to be, before I dare flatter
 “ myself with owing any thing to a more
 “ soft emotion, than those I have men-
 “ tioned. Accuse me not, therefore, of
 “ too much boldness in this petition, but
 “ grant to my despair what you would
 “ deny to the love of

“ Your most faithful,

“ And everlasting slave,

“ H. SAVING.

“ P.S. The favour of one line to let me
 “ know whether I may expect the bles-
 “ sing I implore, will add to the
 “ bounty of it. The same hand that
 “ brings

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“ brings you this, will also deliver your
“ commands to yours as above.

Miss Betsy read this letter several times, and the oftner she did so, the more she saw into the soul of him that sent it. How wide the difference between this, and that she had received from Gayland ! 'Tis true, they both desired a meeting, each made the same request, but the manner in which the former was asked, and the end proposed by the grant of it, she easily perceived were as distant as heaven and hell. She called to mind the great respect he had always treated her with ;— she was convinced both of his honour and sincerity, and thought something was due from her on that account. In fine, after deliberating a little within herself, she resolved to grant his request, and accordingly wrote to him in these terms :

“ *Sir,*

“ **T**H O' it is my fixed determination
“ to encourage the addresses of no
“ man whatever, without the approbation
“ of my guardians, yet I think myself
“ too much obliged to the affection you
“ have expressed for me, to refuse you a
“ favour of so trifling a nature, as that
“ you have taken the pains to ask. I
“ will be at the place you mention to-mor-
“ row,

“ row, some time in the forenoon ; but
“ desire you will expect nothing from it,
“ but a last farewell, as you have pro-
“ mised to be contented with. Till then,
“ adieu.”

After finishing this little billet, she called the maid, whom Saving had made his confidante, into her chamber, and asked her, when she expected he would come for an answer ? To which the other replied, that he had appointed her to meet him at the corner of the street very early in the morning, before any of the windows were open. “ Well then,” said miss Betsey smiling, and putting the letter into her hands, “ give him this, I do it for your
“ sake, Nanny ; for, I suppose, you will
“ have a double fee on the delivery.”
“ The gentleman is too much in love,” answered she, “ not to be grateful.”

Miss Betsey past the remainder of that day, and the ensuing night, with that tranquility which is inseparable from a mind unincumbered with passion ; but the next morning remembering her promise, while lady Mellasin and miss Flora were engaged with the beaux and belles at their levee, she slipped out, and taking a chair the end of the street, went to the milliner according to appointment. She doubted

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not but the impatience of her lover would have brought him there long before her, and was very much amazed to find herself the first comer. She knew not, however, but some extraordinary accident, unforeseen by him, might have happened to detain him longer than he expected, and from the whole course of his past behaviour, could find no shadow of reason to suspect him of a wilful remissness. She sat down in the shop, and amused herself with talking to the woman on the new modes of dress, and such like ordinary matters; but made not the least mention of the motive which had brought her there that morning: and the other, not knowing whether it would be proper to take any notice, was also silent on that occasion; but Miss Betsy observed, she often turned her head towards the window, and ran to the door, looking up and down the street, as if she expected somebody, who was not yet come.

Miss Betsy could not forbear being shocked at a disappointment, which was the last thing in the world she could have apprehended. She had, notwithstanding, the patience to wait from a little past eleven till near two o'clock, expecting, during every moment of that time, that he would either come, or send some excuse for not doing

doing so ; but finding he did neither, and that it was near the hour in which mr. Goodman usually dined, she took her leave of the woman, and went home full of agitations.

The maid, who was in the secret, happening to open the door, and miss Betsey looking round, and perceiving there was nobody in hearing, said to her, “ Nanny, “ are you sure you delivered my letter “ safe into mr. Saving’s hands ? ” “ Sure ! “ miss,” cried the wench, “ yes, as sure “ as I am alive, and he gave me a good “ queen Anne’s guinea for my trouble : — “ I have not had time since to put it up,” continued she, taking it out of her bosom, “ here it is.” “ Well, then, what did he “ say on receiving it ? ” said miss Betsey. “ I never saw a man so transported,” replied she, “ he put it to his mouth, and “ kissed it with such an eagerness, I “ thought he would have devoured it.” Miss Betsey asked no further questions, but went up to her chamber to pull off her hood, not being able to know how she ought to judge of this adventure.

She was soon called down to dinner, but her mind was too much perplexed to suffer her to eat much.

She

She was extremely uneasy the whole day, for an explanation of what at present seemed so mysterious, and this gave her little less pain, than, perhaps, she would have felt had she been possessed with an equal share of love; but in the evening her natural vivacity got the better, and not doubting but the next morning she should receive a letter with a full eclarcissement of this affair, she enjoyed the same sweet repose, as if nothing had happened to ruffle her temper.

The morning came, but brought no billet from that once obsequious lover: — the next, and three or four succeeding ones were barren of the fruit she so much expected. What judgment could she form of an event so odd? — She could not bring herself to think Saving had taken pains to procure a rendezvous with her, on purpose to disappoint and affront her; and was not able to conceive any probable means, by which he should be prevented from writing to her. Death only she thought could be an excuse for him, and had that happened she should have heard of it. Sometimes she fancied that the maid had been treacherous; but when she considered, she could get nothing by being so, and that it was, on the contrary, rather

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rather her interest to be sincere, she rejected that supposition. The various conjectures, which by turns came into her head, rendered her however excessively disturbed, and in a situation which deserved some share of pity, had not her pride kept her from revealing either her discontent, or the motives of it, to any one person in the world.

~~THE HISTORY OF THE~~

CHAP. V.

*Contains nothing very extraordinary,
yet such things as are highly proper
to be known.*

I THINK it is generally allowed, that there are few emotions of the mind more uneasy than suspense. Not the extreme youth of miss Betsy, not all her natural chearfulness, nor her perfect indifference for the son of alderman Saving, could enable her to throw off the vexation, in which his late behaviour had involved her. Had the motive been the most mortifying of any that could be imagined to her vanity, pride and resentment would then have come to her assistance: — she would have despised the author of the insult, and, in time, have forgot the insult

insult itself; but the uncertainty in what manner she ought to think of the man, and this last action of his, made both dwell much longer on her mind, than otherwise they would have done. As the poet truly says,

“When puzzling doubts the anxious
“bosom seize,
“To know the worst is some degree of
“ease.”

This is a maxim which will hold good, even when the strongest and most violent passions operate; but *Miss Betsy* was possessed of no more than a bare curiosity, which as she had as yet no other sensation, which demanded gratification, was sufficiently painful to her.

It was about ten, or twelve days, that she continued to labour under this dilemma; but at the expiration of that time, was partly relieved from it by the following means.

Mr. Goodman happening to meet alderman Saving, with whom he had great business, upon 'Change, desired he would accompany him to an adjacent tavern. To which the other complied; but with an air much more grave and reserved, than

than he was accustomed to put on, with a person whom he had known for a great number of years, and was concerned with in some affairs of traffic; they went together to the ship tavern.

After having ended what they had to say to each other upon business, - "Mr. Goodman," said the alderman, "we have long been friends, I always thought you an honest, fair-dealing man, and am, therefore, very much surprized you should go about to put upon me in the manner you have lately done." "Put upon you, sir," cried the merchant, "I know not what you mean, and am very certain I never did any thing that might call in question my integrity, either to you or any one else." "It was great integrity indeed," resumed the alderman, with a sneer, "to endeavour to draw my only son into a clandestine marriage, with the girl you have at your house." Mr. Goodman was astonished, as well he might, at this accusation, and perceiving by some other words that the alderman let fall, that he was well acquainted with the love young Saving had professed for miss Betty, frankly related to him all that he knew of the courtship, and the method he had taken to put a stop to it. "That was not enough,

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“ enough, sir,” cried the alderman hastily,
“ you should have told me of it. — Do
“ you think young folks, like them,
“ would have regarded your forbidding ?
“ — No, no ; I’ll warrant you they would
“ have found some way or other to come
“ together before now, and the boy might
“ have been ruined, if I had not been in-
“ formed by other hands how things were
“ carried on, and put it out of the power
“ of any of you to impose upon me.
“ The girl may spread her nets to catch
“ some other woodcock, if she can, —
“ thanks to heaven, and my own pru-
“ dence, my son is far enough out of her
“ reach.”

Mr. Goodman, though one of the best
natured men in the world, could not keep
himself from being a little ruffled at the
alderman’s discourse, and told him, that
though he had been far from encouraging
Mr. Saving’s inclinations, and should al-
ways think it the duty of a son to con-
sult his father in every thing he did, es-
pecially in so material a point as that of
marriage ; yet he saw no reason for treat-
ing Miss Betsy with contempt, as she was
of a good family, had a very pretty for-
tune of her own, and suitable accomplish-
ments.

Mr. I.

D

“ You

“ You take a great deal of pains to set
 “ her off,” said the alderman, “ and since
 “ you married a court-lady not worth a
 “ groat, have got all the romantic idle
 “ notions of the other end of the town,
 “ as finely as if you had been bred there.
 “ A good family! — very pleasant i’faith.
 “ Will a good family go to market? —
 “ Will it buy a joint of mutton at the
 “ butcher’s? — Or a pretty gown at the
 “ mercer’s? Then, a pretty fortune you
 “ say; — enough it may be to squander
 “ away at cards and masquerades, for a
 “ month or two. She has suitable ac-
 “ complishments too; — yes, indeed, they
 “ are suitable ones, I believe: — I sup-
 “ pose she can sing, dance, and jabber a
 “ little French; but I’ll be hanged if she
 “ knows how to make a pye, or a pud-
 “ ding, or to teach her maid to do it.”

The reflection on lady Mellasin, in the
 beginning of this speech, so much incensed
 mr. Goodman, that he could scarce at-
 tend to the latter part of it: — he forbore
 interrupting him, however, but as soon
 as he had done speaking, replied in terms
 which shewed his resentment. In fine,
 such hot words passed between them, as,
 had they been younger men, might have
 produced worse consequences; — but the
 spirit

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spirit of both being equally evaporated in mutual reproaches, they grew more calm, and, at last, talked themselves into as good harmony as ever. Mr. Goodman said, he was sorry that he had been prevailed upon, by the young man's entreaties, to keep his courtship to miss Betsy a secret; and the alderman begged pardon in his turn, for having said any thing disrespectful of lady Mellasin.

On this they shook hands, another half pint of sherry was called for, and before they parted, the alderman acquainted Mr. Goodman, that to prevent entirely all future correspondence between his son and miss Betsy, he had sent him to Holland some days ago, without letting him know any thing of his intentions, 'till every thing was ready for his embarkation. "I sent," said he, "the night before he was to go, his portmanteau, and what other luggage I thought he would have occasion for, to the inn where the Harwich stage puts up, and making him be called up very early in the morning, told him, he must go a little way out of town with me, upon extraordinary business:—he seemed very unwilling, said he had appointed that morning to meet a gentleman, and begged I would delay the journey to the next day, or

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“ even till the afternoon. What caused
“ this backwardness, I cannot imagine,
“ for I think it was impossible he could
“ know my designs on this score ; but,
“ whatever was in his head, I took care
“ to disappoint it : — I listened to none of
“ his excuses, nor trusted him out of my
“ sight, but forced him to go with me to
“ the coach, in which I had secured a
“ couple of places. He was horridly
“ shocked when he found where he was
“ going, and would fain have persuaded
“ me to repeal his banishment, as he cal-
“ led it : — I laughed in my sleeve, but
“ took no notice of the real motive I had
“ for sending him away, and told him,
“ there was an absolute necessity for his
“ departure ; — that I had a business of
“ the greatest importance at Rotterdam
“ in which I could trust nobody but him-
“ self to negotiate, and that he would
“ find, in his trunk, letters and other
“ papers, which would instruct him how
“ to act.

“ In fine,” continued the alderman,
“ went with him aboard, staid with
“ him till they were ready to weigh
“ anchor, then returned, and stood
“ the beach till the ship sailed
“ out of sight, so that if my gentleman
“ had a thought of writing to his master

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 53

" he had not the least opportunity for it." He added, that he did not altogether deceive his son, having, indeed, some affairs to transact at Rotterdam, though they were not of the mighty consequence he had pretended; but which he had, by a private letter to his agent there, ordered should be made appear as intricate and perplexed as possible, that the young gentleman's return might be delayed as long as there was any plausible excuse for detaining him, without his seeing through the reason of it.

Mr. Goodman praised the alderman's discretion in the whole conduct of this business, and to atone for having been prevailed upon to keep young Saving's secret from him, offered to make interest with a friend he had at the post-office, to stop any letter should be directed for Miss Betsy Thoughtless, by the way of Holland; " by which means," said he, " all communication between the young people will soon be put an end to; he will grow weary of writing when he receives no answers, and she of thinking of him as a lover, when she finds he ceases to tell her he is so."

The alderman was ready to hug his old friend for this proposal, which, it is cer-

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tain, he made in the sincerity of his heart, for they no sooner parted, than he went to the office, and fulfilled his promise.

When he came home, in order to hinder miss Betsy from expecting to hear any thing more of mr. Saving, he told her he had been treated by the alderman pretty roughly, on account of the encouragement had been given in his house to the amorous addresses had been made to her by his son; "and," added he, "the old man is so incensed against him, for having a thought of that kind in your favour, that he has sent him beyond sea, — I know not to what part; — but it seems he is never to come back, till he has given full assurances the liking he has for you is utterly worn off."

"He might have spared himself the pains," said miss Betsy, blushing with disdain, "his son could have informed him, how little I was inclinable to listen to any thing he said on the score of love; and I myself, if he had asked me the question, would have given him the strongest assurances that words could form, that if ever I changed my condition, which heaven knows I am far from thinking on as yet, I should never

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 55

" never be prevailed upon to do it, by
" any merits his son was possessed of."

Mr. Goodman congratulated her on the indifference she expressed, and told her, he hoped she would always continue in the same humour, till an offer which promised more satisfaction in marriage should happen to be made.

Nothing more was said on this head, but miss Betsy, on ruminating on what Mr. Goodman had related, easily imagined, that the day in which he had been sent away, was the same on which he had appointed to meet her, and therefore excused his not coming as a thing unavoidable; yet as she knew not the precaution his father had taken, was not so ready to forgive him for not sending a line to prevent her waiting so long for him at the habit-shop. She could not, however, when she reflected on the whole tenour of his deportment to her, think it possible he should all at once become guilty of wilfully omitting, what even common good manners and decency required. She soon grew weary, however, of troubling herself about the matter, and a very few days served to make her lose even the memory of it.

CHAP. VI.

May be of some service to the ladies, especially the younger sort, if well attended to.

MISS Betſy had now no perſon that profeſſed a ſerious paſſion for her ; but as ſhe had yet never ſeen the man capable of inſpiring her with the leaſt emotions of tenderneſs, ſhe was quite eaſy as to that point, and wiſhed nothing beyond what ſhe enjoyed, the pleaſure of being told ſhe was very handſome, and gallanted about by a great number of thoſe, who go by the name of very pretty fellows. Pleased with the praiſe, ſhe regarded not the condition or merits of the praiſer, and ſuffered herſelf to be treated, preſented, and ſquir'd about to all public places, either by the rake, the man of honour, the wit, or the fool, the married, as well as the unmarried, without diſtinction, and juſt as either fell in her way.

Such a conduct as this could not fail of laying her open to the censure of malicious tongues: — the agreeableness of her person, her wit, and the many ac-

complishments she was mistress of, made her envied and hated, even by those who professed the greatest friendship for her. Several there were who, though they could scarce support the vexation it gave them to see her so much preferred to themselves, yet chose to be as much with her as possible, in the cruel hope of finding some fresh matter wherewith to blast her reputation.

Certain it is, that tho' she was as far removed, as innocence itself, from all intent or wish of committing a real ill, yet she paid too little regard to the appearances of it, and said and did many things, which the actually criminal would be more cautious to avoid. Hurried by an excess of vanity, and that love of pleasure so natural to youth, she indulged herself in liberties, of which she foresaw not the consequences.

Lady Trusty, who sincerely loved her, both for her own sake, and that of her deceased mother, came more often to Mr. Goodman's than otherwise she would have done, on purpose to observe the behaviour of Miss Betsy: she had heard some accounts, which gave her great dissatisfaction; but as she was a woman of penetration, she easily perceived, that plain
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reproof was not the way to prevail on her to reclaim the errors of her conduct ; --- that she must be insensibly weaned from what, at present, she took so much delight in, and brought into a different manner of living, by ways which should rather seem to flatter than check her vanity : she therefore earnestly wished to get her down with her into L ——— e, where she was soon going herself ; but knew not how to ask her without making the same invitation to miss Flora, whose company she no way desired, and whose example she was sensible had very much contributed to give miss Betsey that air of levity, which rendered her good sense almost useless to her.

This worthy lady happening to find her alone one day, (a thing not very usual) she asked, by way of sounding her inclination, if she would not be glad to see L ——— e again ; to which she replied, that there were many people for whom she had a very great respect, but the journey was too long to be taken merely on the score of making a short visit ; for she owned she did not like the country well enough to continue in it for any length of time.

Lady Trusty would fain have persuaded her into a better opinion of the place she was born in, and which most of her family had passed the greatest part of their lives in; but miss Betsy was not to be argued into any tolerable ideas of it, and plainly told her ladyship, that what she called a happy tranquil manner of spending ones days, seemed to her little better than being buried alive.

From declaring her aversion to a country life, she ran into such extravagant encomiums on those various amusements, which London every day presented, that lady Trusty perceived it would not be without great difficulty she would be brought to a more just way of thinking: she concealed, however, as much as possible, the concern it gave her to hear her express herself in this manner, contenting herself with saying, calmly, that London was, indeed, a very agreeable place to live in, especially for young people, and the pleasures it afforded were very elegant; "but then" said she, "the too frequent repetition of them, may so much engross the mind, as to take it off from other objects, which ought to have their share in it: besides," continued she, "there are but too frequent proofs, that

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“ an innate principle of virtue is not al-
 “ ways a sufficient guard against the many
 “ snares laid for it, under the shew of in-
 “ nocent pleasures, by wicked and design-
 “ ing persons of both sexes; nor can it
 “ be esteemed prudence to run ones self
 “ into dangers meerly to shew our strength
 “ in overcoming them; nor, perhaps,
 “ would even the victory turn always to
 “ our glory: the world is censorious,
 “ and seldom ready to put the best con-
 “ struction on things; so that reputation
 “ may suffer, though virtue triumphs.”

Miss Betsey listened to all this with a
 good deal of attention. — The impudent
 attempt Gayland had made on her, came
 fresh into her mind, and made this lady's
 remonstrances sink the deeper into it.
 The power of reflection being a little
 awakened in her, some freedoms also, not
 altogether consistent with strict modesty,
 which others had offered to her, convinced
 her of the error of maintaining too little
 reserve; she thanked her kind adviser, and
 promised to observe the precepts she had
 given.

Lady Trusty finding this good effect of
 what she had said, ventured to proceed so
 far, as to give some hints, that the con-
 duct of miss Flora had been far from
 blame.

blameless ; and, therefore, pursued she, I should be glad, methinks, to see you separated from that young lady, though it were but for a small time ; and then gave her to understand, how great a pleasure it would be to her, to get her down with her to L — e, if it could be any way contrived, that she could go without miss Flora.

“ As I have been so long from home,” said she, “ I know I shall have all the
“ gentry round the country to welcome
“ me at my return, and if you should find
“ the company less polite, than those you
“ leave behind, it will, at least, diversify
“ the scene, and render the entertainments
“ of London new to you a second time,
“ when you come back.”

Miss Betsy found in herself a strong inclination to comply with this proposal, and told lady Trusty, she should think herself happy in passing the whole summer with her ; and as to miss Flora, the same offer might be made to her, without any danger of her accepting it. “ I am not of your
“ opinion,” said the other ; “ the girl has
“ no fortune, but what mr. Goodman shall
“ be pleased to give her ; which cannot
“ be very considerable, as he has a nephew
“ in the East-Indies, whom he is extremely
“ fond

“ fond of, and will make his heir.
 “ Mellasin would, therefore, catch
 “ opportunity of sending her daughter
 “ a place where there are so many g
 “ men of estates, among whom she
 “ have a better chance for getting a
 “ band, than she can have in Lo
 “ where her character would scarce
 “ her to such a hope. I will howe
 pursued she, “ run the risque, and
 “ rather to have a guest, whose con
 “ I do not so well approve of, th
 “ deprived of one I so much value.’

Miss Betsey testified the sense she
 her ladyship’s goodness, in the most
 ful and obliging terms, and lady Me
 and miss Flora coming home soon
 lady Trusty said, she was come on
 pose to ask permission for miss Flor
 miss Betsey to pass two or three n
 with her, down in L ——— e.

Lady Mellasin, as the other had
 gined, seemed extremely pleased w
 invitation, and told her, she did her
 ter a great deal of honour, and she
 take care things should be prepar
 both the young ladies to attend her,
 setting out. Lady Trusty then to
 she had fixed the day for it, whic
 about a fortnight after this convey

and some other matters relating to the journey being regulated, took her leave, highly pleased with the thoughts of getting miss Betsy to a place, where she should have an opportunity of using her utmost endeavours to improve the good she found in her disposition, and of weaning her, by degrees, from any ill habits she might have contracted in that Babel of mixed company she was accustomed to at lady Mellasin's.

C H A P. VII.

Is a medley of various particulars, which pave the way for matters of more consequence.

MISS Flora had now nothing in her head, but the many hearts she expected to captivate, when she should arrive in L———e; and lady Mellasin, who soothed her in all her vanities, resolved to spare nothing which she imagined would contribute to that purpose. Miss Betsy, who had the same ambition, though for different ends, made it also pretty much her study to set off, to the best advantage, the charms she had received from nature. The important article of dress now engrossed

grossed the whole conversation of these ladies. The day after that in which lady Trusty had made the invitation to the two young ones, lady Mellasin went with them to the mercer's to buy some silks: she pitched on a very genteel new-fashioned pattern for her daughter; but chose one for miss Betsy, which, though rich, seemed to her not well fancied; she testified her disapprobation, but lady Mellasin said so much in the praise of it, and the mercer, either to please her, or because he was desirous of getting it sold, assured miss Betsy that it was admired by every body, that it was the newest thing he had in his shop, and had already sold several pieces to ladies of the first quality: all this did not argue miss Betsy into a liking of it; yet between them she was over-perswaded to have it. When these purchases were made, they went home, only stopped at the mantua-maker's in their way, to order her to come that afternoon; lady Mellasin did no more than set them down, and then went on in the coach to make a visit.

The young ladies fell to reviewing their silks; but miss Betsy was no way satisfied with her's: the more she looked upon it, the worse it appeared to her. "I shall never wear this with any pleasure," said she; "I wish the man had it in his shop."

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“shop again, for I think it quite ugly.” Miss Flora told her, that she wondered at her, that the thing was perfectly handsome, and that my lady’s judgment was never before called in question. “That may be,” replied miss Betsy, “but certainly every one ought to please their own fancy in the choice of their cloaths; for my part I shall never endure to see myself in it.” “Not when their fancy happens to differ from that of those who know better than themselves what is fit for them,” cried miss Flora; “and, besides, have the power over them.” She spoke this with so much pertness, that miss Betsy, who had a violent spirit, was highly provoked. “Power over them!” cried she, “I do not know what you mean, miss Flora; mr. Goodman is one of my guardians indeed, but I don’t know why that should entitle his lady to direct me in what I shall wear.”

Mr. Goodman, who happened to be looking over some papers in a little closet he had within his parlour, hearing part of this dispute, and finding it was like to grow pretty warm, came out, in hopes of moderating it. On hearing miss Betsy’s complaint, he desired to see the silk; which being shewn him, “I do not pretend,” said he, “to much understanding in these things; but, methinks, it is very handsome.”

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“some.” It would do well enough for
 “winter, sir,” replied miss Betsy; “but
 “it is too hot and heavy for summer;
 “besides, it is so thick and clumsy, it
 “would make me look as big again as I
 “am: I’ll not wear it, I am resolved, in
 “the country, whatever I do when I come
 “to town, in the dark weather.

“Well,” said mr. Goodman, “I will
 “speak to my lady to get it changed
 “for something else.” “Indeed, sir,”
 cried miss Flora, “I am sure my mamma
 “will do no such thing, and take it very
 “ill to hear it proposed.” “You need
 “not put yourself in any heat,” replied
 miss Betsy, “I don’t desire she should be
 “troubled any farther about it; but, sir,”
 continued she, turning to mr. Goodman,
 “I think I am now at an age capable of
 “choosing for myself, in the article of
 “dress; and as it has been settled between
 “you and sir Ralph Trusty, that out of
 “the income of my fortune, thirty pounds
 “a year should be allowed for my board,
 “twenty pounds for my pocket expence
 “and fifty for my cloaths, I think I ought
 “to have the two latter entirely at my own
 “disposal, and to lay it out as I think
 “fit, and not be obliged, like a charity
 “child, to wear whatever livery my benefactor
 “shall be pleased to order.”

spoke this with so much spleen, that Mr. Goodman was a little nettled at it, and told her, that what his wife had done was out of kindness and good-will, which since she did not take as was meant, she should have her money to do with as she would.

"That is all I desire," answered she, "therefore be pleased to let me have twenty guineas now, or, if there does not remain so much in your hands, I will ask Sir Ralph to advance it, and you may return it to him when you settle accounts." "No, no," cried the merchant hastily, "I see no reason to trouble my good friend, Sir Ralph, on such a frivolous matter. You shall have the sum you mention, Miss Betsy, whether so much remains out of the hundred pounds a year set apart for your subsistence, or not, as I can but deduct it out of the next payment; but I would have you manage with discretion, for you may depend, that the surplus of what was at first agreed upon, shall not be broke into, but laid up to increase your fortune, which, by the time you come of age, I hope, will be pretty handsomely improved."

Miss Betsy then assured him, that she was not of his zeal for her interest, and

and hoped she had not offended him in any thing she had said. "No, no," replied he, "I always make allowances for the little impatiencies of persons of your sex and age, especially when dress is concerned." In speaking these words, he opened his bureau, and took out twenty guineas, which he immediately gave her, making her first sign a memorandum of it. Miss Flora was all on fire to have offered something in opposition to this, but durst not do it, and the mantua-maker that instant coming in, she went up stairs with her into her chamber, leaving miss Betsy and Mr. Goodman together; the former of whom, being eager to go about what she intended, ordered a hackney coach to be called, and taking the silk with her, went directly to the shop where it was bought.

The mercer at first seemed unwilling to take it again; but on her telling him, she would always make use of him, for every thing she wanted in his way, and would then buy two suits of him, he at last consented. As she was extremely curious in every thing relating to her shape, she made choice of a pink coloured French lustring, to the end, that the plaits lying flat, would shew the beauty of her waist to more advantage; and to atone for the
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lightness of the silk, purchased as much of it as would flounce the sleeves, and the petticoat from top to bottom: she made the mercer also cut off a sufficient quantity of a rich green Venetian sattin, to make her a riding habit; and as she came home bought a silver trimming for it of Point D'Espagne; all which, with the silk she disliked in exchange, did not amount to the money she had received from mr. Goodman.

On her return, she asked the footman, who opened the door, if the mantua-maker was gone; but he not being able to inform her, she ran hastily up stairs, to miss Flora's chamber, which, indeed, was also her own; for they lay together: she was about to bounce in, but found the door was locked, and the key taken out on the inside. This very much surprised her, especially as she thought she had heard miss Flora's voice, as she was at the top of the stair-case: wanting, therefore, to be satisfied who was with her, she went as softly as she could into lady Mellasin's dressing-room, which was parted from the chamber but by a slight wainscot: she put her ear close to the pannel, in order to discover the voices of them that spoke, and finding, by some light that came through a crack or flaw in the boards, her eyes, as well

well as ears, contributed to a discovery she little expected. In fine, she plainly perceived miss Flora, and a man rise off the bed; she could not at first discern who he was, but, on his turning to go out of the room, knew him to be no other than Gayland. They went out of the chamber together, as gently as they could; and tho' miss Betsy might, by taking three steps, have met them in the passage, and have had an opportunity of revenging herself on miss Flora for the late airs she had given herself, by shewing, how near she was to the scene of infamy she had been acting; yet the shock she felt herself, on being witness of it, kept her immoveable for some time, and she suffered them to depart without the mortification of thinking any one knew of their being together, in the manner they were.

This young lady, who though, as I have already taken notice, was of too volatile and gay a disposition, hated any thing that had the least tincture of indecency, was so much disconcerted at the discovery she had made, that she had not power to stir from the place she was in, much less to resolve how to behave in this affair; that is, whether it would be best, or not, to let miss Flora know she was in the se-

cret of her shame, or to suffer her to think herself secure.

She was, however, beginning to meditate on this point, when she heard miss Flora come up stairs, calling at every step, "miss Betsy! — miss Betsy! — where are you?" Gayland was gone, and his young mistress being told miss Betsy was come home, guessed it was she who had given an interruption to their pleasures, by coming to the door; she, therefore, as she could not imagine her so perfectly convinced, contrived to disguise the whole, and worst of the truth, by revealing a part of it; and as soon as she had found her, "Lord, miss Betsy!" cried she, with an unparell'd assurance, "where have you been? — how do you think I have been served by that cursed toad Gayland? he came up into our chamber, where the mantua-maker and I were, and as soon as she was gone, locked the door, and began to kiss and touze me so, that I protest I was frightened almost out of my wits. The devil meant no harm though, I believe, for I got rid of him easy enough; but I wish you had rapped heartily at the door, and obliged him to open it, that we both might have rated him for his impudence." "Some people have a great deal of impudence,"
"in-

“ indeed,” replied miss Betsey, astonished at her manner of bearing it off. “ Aye, so they have, my dear, rejoined the other, with a careless air; but, prithee, where have you been rambling by your self?” “ No farther than Bedford-street,” answered miss Betsey: “ you may see on what errand,” continued she, pointing to the silks, which she had laid down on a chair. Miss Flora presently ran to the bundle, examined what it contained, and either being in a better humour, or affecting to be so, than when they talked on this head in the parlour, testified no disapprobation of what she had done; but, on the contrary, talked to her in such soft obliging terms, that miss Betsey, who had a great deal of good-nature, when not provoked by any thing that seemed an affront to herself, could not find in her heart to say any thing to give her confusion.

When lady Mellasin came home, and was informed how miss Betsey had behaved, in relation to the silk, she at-first put on an air full of resentment; but finding the other wanted neither wit nor spirit to defend her own cause, and not caring to break with her, especially as her daughter was going with her to L———e, soon grew more moderate, and, at length
affected

affected to think no more of it. Certain it is, however, that this affair, silly as it was, and, as one would think, insignificant in itself, lay broiling in the minds of both mother and daughter, and they waited only for an opportunity of venting their spite, in such a manner, as should not make them appear to have the least tincture of so foul and mean a passion; but as neither of them were capable of a sincere friendship, and had no real regard for any one beside themselves, their displeasure was of little consequence.

Preparations for the journey of the young ladies, seemed, for the present, to employ all their thoughts, and diligence enough was used to get every thing ready against the time prefixed, which wanted but ~~three~~ days of being expired, when an unforeseen accident put an entire stop to it.

Miss Betsy received a letter from her brother, Mr. Francis Thoughtless, accompanied with another to Mr. Goodman, acquainting them, that he had obtained leave from the head of the college, to pass his time in London; that he should set out for Oxford in two days, and hoped for the satisfaction of being with them some hours after his letter. What could

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could she now do? it would have been a sin, not only against natural affection, but against the rules of common good manners, to have left the town, either on the news of his arrival, or immediately after it; nor could lady Trusty expect, or desire she should entertain a thought of doing so: she was too wise, and too good not to consider the interest of families, very much depended on the strict union among the branches of it; and that the natural affection between brothers and sisters, could not be too much cultivated. Far, therefore, from insisting on the promise miss Betsey had made of going with her into the country, she congratulated her on the happy disappointment, and told her, that she should receive her with a double satisfaction, if, after mr. Francis returned to Oxford, she would come and pass what then remained of the summer season with her. This, miss Betsey assured her ladyship, she would do; so that, according to all appearance, the benefits she might have received, by being under the eye of so excellent an instructress, were but delayed, not lost.



CHAP. VIII.

Relates how, by a concurrence of odd circumstances, miss Betsy was brought pretty near the crisis of her fate, and the means by which she escaped.

MR. Francis Thoughtless arrived in town the very evening before the day in which Sir Ralph Trusty and his lady were to set out for L ——— e. They had not seen this young gentleman since the melancholly occasion of his father's funeral, and would have been glad to have had some time with him; but could no way put off their Journey, as word was sent of the day in which they expected to be at home! Sir Ralph knew very well, that a great number of his tenants, and friends, would meet him on the road, and a letter would not reach them soon enough to prevent them from being disappointed: they supped with him, however, at Mr. Goodman's, who would not permit him to have any other home than his house, during his stay in town. Lady Trusty, on taking leave of Miss Betsy, said to her, she hoped she should remember her promise when her brother was returned to Oxford; on

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which she replied, that she could not be so much an enemy to her own happiness as to fail.

Miss Betsey and this brother had been always extremely fond of each other, and the length of time they had been asunder, and the improvement which that time had made in both, heightened their mutual satisfaction in meeting.

All that troubled miss Betsey now, was, that her brother happened to come to London at a season of the year, in which he could not receive the least satisfaction: the king was gone to Hanover, all the foreign ministers, and great part of the nobility, attended him, and the rest were retired to their country seats; so that an entire stop was put to all public diversions worth seeing. There were no plays, no operas, no masquerades, no balls, no public shews, except at the little theatre in the Hay-market, then known by the name of F——g's scandal-shop; because he frequently exhibited there certain drolls, or, more properly, invectives against the ministry: in doing which it appears extremely probable, that he had two views, the one to get money, which he very much wanted, from such as delighted in low humour, and could not distinguish true satire from scurrility; and the other

in the hope of having some post given him by those whom he had abused, in order to silence his dramatic talent. But it is not my business to point out either the merit of that gentleman's performances, or the motives he had for writing them, as the town is perfectly acquainted both with his abilities and success; and has since seen him, with astonishment, wriggle himself into favour, by pretending to cajole those he had not the power to intimidate,

But though there were none of the diversions I have mentioned, nor Ranelagh at that time thought of, nor Vauxhall, Marylebone, nor Cuper's-gardens, in the reputation they since have been, the young gentleman found sufficient to entertain him: empty as the town was, lady Mellasin was not without company, who made frequent parties of pleasure, and when nothing else was to be found for recreation, cards filled up the void.

Nothing material enough to be inserted in this history happened to miss Betsy, during the time her brother stayed, till one evening, as the family were sitting together, some discourse concerning Oxford being on the tapis, mr. Francis spoke so much in the praise of the wholesomeness

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of the air, the many fine walks and gardens with which the place abounded, and the good company that were continually resorting to it, that miss Betsey cried out, she longed to see it, — miss Flora said the same.

On this, the young gentleman gave them an invitation to go down with him, when he went, saying, they never could go at a better time, as both the assizes and races were to be in about a month. Miss Betsey said, such a jaunt would vastly delight her. Miss Flora echoed her approbation, and added, she wished my lady would consent. “I have no objection to
“make to it,” replied lady Mellasin, “as
“you will have a conductor, who, I know,
“will be very careful of you.” Mr. Goodman’s consent was also asked, for the sake of form, though every one knew the opinion of his wife was, of itself, a sufficient sanction.

Though it is highly probable, that miss Betsey was much better pleased with this journey, than she would have been with that to L———e, yet she thought herself obliged, both in gratitude and good manners, to write to lady Trusty, and make the best excuse she could for her
breach.

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breach of promise, which she did in these terms.

To lady TRUSTY.

Most dear and honoured madam,

“ MY brother Frank being extremely
“ desirous of shewing miss Flora and
“ myself the curiosities of Oxford, has ob-
“ tained leave from mr. Goodman, and
“ lady Mellasin, for us to accompany him
“ to that place. I am afraid the season
“ will be too far advanced, for us to take
“ a journey to L———e at our return;
“ therefore flatter myself your ladyship
“ will pardon the indispensable necessity I
“ am under of deferring, till next spring,
“ the happiness I proposed in waiting on
“ you. All here present my worthy guar-
“ dian, and your ladyship, with their best
“ respects. I beg mine may be equally
“ acceptable, and that you will always
“ continue to favour with your good
“ wishes, her, who is,

“ With the most perfect esteem,

“ Madam,

“ Your ladyship’s most obliged,

“ And most obedient servant,

“ E. THOUGHTLESS.”

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The time for the young gentleman's departure being arrived, they went together in the stage, attended by a footman of Mr. Goodman's, whom Lady Mellasin would needs send with them, in order to give the young ladies an air of dignity.

They found, on their arrival at that justly celebrated seat of learning, that Mr. Francis had given no greater eulogiums on it, than it merited: they were charmed with the fine library, the museum, the magnificence of the halls belonging to the several colleges, the physic-garden, and other curious walks; but that which above all the rest gave the most satisfaction to Miss Betsey, as well as to her companion, was that respectful gallantry with which they found themselves treated, by the gentlemen of the university. Mr. Francis was extremely beloved amongst them, on account of his affability, politeness, and good humour, and they seemed glad of an opportunity of shewing the regard they had for the brother, by paying all manner of assiduities to the sister; he gave the ladies an elegant entertainment at his own rooms, to which also some of those with whom he was the most intimate were invited. All these thought themselves bound to return the same compliment: the com-

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pany of every one present were desired to their respective apartments; and as each of these gentlemen had, besides, other particular friends of their own, whom they wished to oblige, the number of the guests were still increased at every feast.

By this means, miss Betsy and miss Flora soon acquired a very large acquaintance, and as through the care of Mr. Francis they were lodged in one of the best and most reputable houses in town, their families known, and themselves were young ladies who knew how to behave as well as dress, and receive company in the most elegant and polite manner, every one was proud of a pretence for visiting them.

The respect paid to them would doubtless have every day increased, during the whole time they should have thought proper to continue in Oxford, and on quitting it have left behind them the highest idea of their merit, if, by one inconsiderate action, they had not at once forfeited the esteem they had gained, and rendered themselves the subjects of ridicule, even to those who before had regarded them with veneration.

They were walking out one day, about four or two before the time in which they

they usually dined, into the parks, where they were met by a gentleman-commoner, and a young student, both of whom they had been in company with at most of the entertainments beforementioned. The sparks begged leave to attend them, which being readily granted, they walked all together for some time; but the weather being very warm, the gentleman-commoner took an occasion to remind the ladies how much their beauty would be in danger of suffering from the immoderate rays of phœbus, and proposed going to some gardens, full of the most beautiful alcoves and arbours, so shaded over, that the sun, even in his meridian force, could, at the most, but glimmer through the delightful gloom: he painted the pleasures of the place, to which he was desirous of leading them, with so romantic an energy, that they immediately, and without the least scruple or hesitation, consented to be conducted thither.

This was a condescension, which he, who asked it, scarce expected would be granted, and, on finding it so easily obtained, began to form some conjectures no way to the advantage of these ladies reputation. It is certain, indeed, that as he professed a friendship for the brother, he ought not, in strict honour, to have per-
posed

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 83

posed any thing to the sister, which would be unbecoming her to agree to ; but he was young, gay to an excess, and in what he said, or did, not always took consideration for his guide,

They went on laughing till they came to the place he mentioned, where the gentlemen having shewed their fair companions into the gardens, in which were, indeed, several recesses, no less dark than had been described : on entering one of them miss Betsy cried, " Bless me ! this " is fit for nothing but for people to do " what they are ashamed of in the light." " The fitter then, madam," replied the gentleman-commoner, " to encourage a " lover, who, perhaps, has suffered more " through his own timidity, than the " cruelty of the object he adores." He accompanied these words with a seizure of both her hands, and two or three kisses on her lips. The young student was no less free with miss Flora ; but neither of these ladies gave themselves the trouble to reflect what consequences might possibly attend a prelude of this nature, and repulsed the liberties they took in such a manner, as made the offenders imagine they had not sinned beyond a pardon.

They would not, however, be prevailed on to stay, or even to sit down in that darksome recess, but went back into a house, where they were shewn into a very pleasant room, which commanded the whole prospect of the garden, and was sufficiently shaded from the sun by jessamin and honeysuckles, which grew against the windows: here wine, cakes, jellies, and such like things, being brought, the conversation was extremely lively, and full of gallantry, without the least mixture of indecency.

The gentlemen exerted all their wit and eloquence, to persuade the ladies not to go home in the heat of the day; but take up with such entertainment as the place they were in was able to present them with. Neither of them made any objection, except that having said they should dine at home, the family would wait in expectation of their coming; but this difficulty was easily got over: the footman, who had attended miss Betsy and miss Flora, in their morning's walk, was in the house, and might be sent to acquaint the people, that they were not to expect them. As they were neither displeased with the company, nor place they were in, they needed not abundance of persuasions.

and

and the servant was immediately dispatched. The gentlemen went out of the room, to give orders for having something prepared, but staid not two minutes; and, on their return, omitted nothing that might keep up the good humour and sprightliness of their fair companions.

Persons of so gay and volatile a disposition, as these four, could not content themselves with sitting still, and barely talking, — every limb must be in motion, — every faculty employed. The gentleman-commoner took miss Betsy's hand, and led her some steps of a minuet, then fell into a rigadon, then into the loup, and so ran through all the school-dances, without regularly beginning or ending any one of them, or of the tunes he sung: the young student was not less alert with miss Flora; so that between singing, dancing, and laughing, they all grew extremely warm. Miss Betsy ran to a window to take breath, and get a little air; her partner followed, and taking up her fan, which lay on a table, employed it with a great deal of dexterity, to assist the wind, that came in at the casement for her refreshment. "Heaven!" cried he, "how divinely lovely do you now appear? the goddess of the spring, nor Venus's self, was ever painted half so beautiful."

"What

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“What eyes! — what a mouth! — and
 “what a shape!” continued he, survey-
 ing her, as it were, from head to foot,
 “how exquisitely turned!—how taper!—
 “how slender! — I don’t believe you
 “measure half a yard round the waist.”
 In speaking these words, he put his hand-
 kerchief about her waist, after which he
 tied it round his head, repeating these lines
 of mr. Waller’s :

“That which her slender waist confin’d
 “Shall now my joyful temples bind ;
 “No monarch but would give his
 “crown,
 “His arms might do what this has
 “done.”

“O fie upon it,” said miss Betsy,
 laughing, and snatching it from his head,
 “this poetry is stale, I should rather have
 “expected from an Oxonian, some fine
 “thing of his own extempore, on this oc-
 “casion; which, perhaps, I might have
 “been vain enough to have got printed
 “in the monthly magazines.”

“Ah! madam,” replied he, looking
 on her with dying languishments, “where
 “the heart is deeply affected, the brain
 “feldom produces any thing but inco-
 “gruous ideas. Had Sacarissa been mad-
 “dren

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 87

"treasures of the charms you are, or had
"Waller loved like me, he had been less
"capable of writing in the manner he
"did."

The student perceiving his friend was entering into a particular conversation with miss Betsy, found means to draw miss Flora out of the room, and left them together, though this young lady afterwards protested, she called to miss Betsy to follow ; but if she did, it was in such a low voice, that the other did not hear her, and continued her pleasantries, rallying the gentleman-commoner, on every thing he said, till he finding the opportunity he had of being revenged, soon turned his humble adoration into an air more free and natural to him. As she was opening her mouth to utter some sarcasm or other, he caught her in his arms, and began to kiss her with so much warmth and eagerness that surprized her ; she struggled to get loose, and called miss Flora, not knowing she was gone, to come to her assistance. The efforts she made at first to oblige him to desist, were not, however, quite so strenuous as they ought to have been, on such occasion ; but finding he was about to proceed to greater liberties than any man she had ever taken with her, she collected all her strength, and broke from him,

him, when looking round the room, and seeing no-body there, "Bless me," cried she, "what is the meaning of all this? — "where are our friends?" "They are gone," said he, "to pay the debt, which love, and youth, and beauty challenge; let us not be remiss, nor waste the precious moments in idle scruples. Come, my angel!" pursued he, endeavouring to get her once more into his arms, "make me the happiest of mankind, and be as divinely good as you are fair."

"I do not understand you, sir," replied she, "but neither desire, nor will stay to hear an explanation." She spoke this with somewhat of an haughty air, and was making towards the door; but he was far from being intimidated, and, instead of suffering her to pass, he seized her a little roughly with one hand, and with the other made fast the door; "Come, come, my dear creature," cried he, "no more resistance, you see you are in my power, and the very name of being so, is sufficient to absolve you to yourself, for any act of kindness you may bestow upon me; be generous then, and be assured it shall be an inviolable secret."

She was about to say something, but he stopped her mouth with kisses, and forced
he

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 89

her to sit down in a chair, where holding her fast, her ruin had certainly been completed, if a loud knocking at the door had not prevented him from prosecuting his design.

This was the brother of miss Betsy, w^ho having been at her lodgings, on his coming from thence met the footman, who had been sent to acquaint the family the ladies would not dine at home: he asked where his sister was, and the fellow having told him, came directly to the place. A waiter of the house shewed him to the room; on finding it locked, he was strangely amazed, and both knocked and called to have it opened, with a good deal of vehemence.

The gentleman-commoner knowing his voice, was shocked to the last degree; but quitted that instant his intended prey, and let him enter. Mr. Francis, on coming in, knew not what to think; he saw the gentleman in great disorder, and his sister in much more. "What is the meaning of this," said he: "Sister, how came you here?" "Ask me no questions at present," replied she, scarce able to speak, so strangely had her late fright seized on her spirits, "but see me safe from this cursed house, and that worst of men." Her speaking in this manner, made mr. Francis

Francis apprehend the whole, and perhaps more than the truth. "How, sir!" he, darting a furious look on the gentleman-commoner, "what is it I hear! have you dared to—" "What have dared to," interrupted the other, "am capable of defending." "Well," rejoined the brother of miss Betty, "perhaps, I may put you to the test," "but this is not a time or place," then took hold of his sister's hand, led her down stairs; as they were going out, miss Betty stopping a little to adjust her dress, which was strangely disordered, she bethought herself of miss Flora, though she was very angry with, she did not choose to leave behind at the mercy of such rakes, as she had reason to think those were, whom she had been in company with. Just as she was desiring her brother to send a waiter in search of the young lady, they saw her coming out of the garden, led by the young fellow who, as soon as he beheld Mr. Frank, cried, "ha! Frank, how came you here?" "you look out of humour." "How came here, it matters not," replied she sullenly; "and as to my being out of humour, perhaps you may know more than I yet do, what cause I have for being so."

He waited for no answer to these words, but conducted his sister out of the house as hastily as he could: miss Flora followed, after having taken leave of her companion in what manner she thought proper.

On their coming home, miss Betsy related to her brother, as far as her modesty would permit, all the particulars of this adventure, and ended with saying, that sure it was heaven alone that gave her strength to prevent the perpetration of the villain's intentions. Mr. Francis, all the time she was speaking, bit his lips, and shewed great tokens of an extraordinary disturbance in his mind; but offered not the least interruption. When he perceived she had done, "well, sister," said he, "I shall hear what he has to say, and will endeavour to oblige him to ask your pardon;" and soon after took his leave.

Miss Betsy did not very well comprehend his meaning, in these words, and was, indeed, still in too much confusion to consider on any thing; but what the consequences were of this transaction the reader will presently be informed of.



~~CONTAINING A HISTORY OF THE~~

CHAP. IX.

Contains such things as might be reasonably expected, after the preceding adventure.

WHEN, in any thing irregular, and liable to censure, more persons than one are concerned, how natural it is for each to accuse the other, and it often happens, in this case, that the greatest part of the blame falls on the least culpable.

After mr. Francis had left the ladies, in order to be more fully convinced in this matter, and take such measures as he thought would best become him for the reparation of the affront offered to the honour of his family, miss Flora began to reproach miss Betsey, for having related any thing of what had passed to her brother: "By your own account," said she, "no harm was done to you; but some people love to make a bustle about nothing." "And some people," replied miss Betsey, tartly, "love nothing but the gratifications of their own passions, and having no sense of virtue or modesty themselves, can have no regard to that

“ of another.” “ What do you mean, miss?” cried the other, with a pert air. “ My meaning is pretty plain,” rejoined miss Betsy, “ but since you affect so much ignorance, I must tell you, that the expectations of a second edition of the same work Mr. Gayland had helped you to compose, though from another quarter, tempted you to sneak out of the room, and leave your friend in danger of falling a sacrifice to what her soul most detests and scorns. These words stung Miss Flora to the quick; her face was in an instant covered with a scarlet blush, and every feature betrayed the confusion of her mind; but recovering herself from it, much sooner than most others of her age could have done: “ Good lack,” cried she, “ I fancy you are setting up for a prude; but pray, how came Mr. Gayland into your head? — “ What, because I told you he innocently romped with me one day in the chamber, are you so censorious as to infer any thing criminal passed between us?” “ Whatever I infer,” replied Miss Betsy, “ I have better vouchers for the truth of, than your report, and I should advise you, when you go home, to get the chink in the pannel of the wainscot of my lady’s dressing-room tapped up, or your next rendezvous “ with

“ with that gentleman, may possibly have
 “ witnesses of more ill-nature than my-
 “ self.” “ That can scarcely be,” said
 miss Flora, ready to burst with vexation;
 “ but don’t think I value your little ma-
 “ lice; you are only angry because he
 “ slighted the advances you made him,
 “ and took all opportunities to shew how
 “ much his heart and judgment gave
 “ the preference to me.” These words
 so piqued the vanity of miss Betsey, that
 not able to bear she should continue in the
 imagination of being better liked than
 herself, though even by the man she hated,
 told her the solicitations he had made to
 her, the letter she had received from him,
 and the rebuff she had given him upon
 it; “ so that,” pursued she, “ it was not
 “ till after he found there was no hopes
 “ of gaining me, that he carried his de-
 “ voirs to you.”

Miss Flora was more nettled at this
 eclaircissement, than she was at the disco-
 very she now perceived the other had
 made of her intrigue: she pretended,
 however, not to believe a word of what
 she had said; but willing to evade all fur-
 ther discourse on that head, returned to
 the adventure they had just gone through
 with the Oxonians. “ Never expect,”
 said she, “ to pass it upon any one.”

“ come

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common sense, that if you had not a mind to have been alone with that terrible man, as you now describe him, you would have staid in the room after he was gone, and called to you to follow."

It was in vain that miss Betsy denied either heard her speak, or knew any thing of her departure, till some time after she was gone, and the gentleman-moroner began to use her with such familiarities as convinced her he was sensible no witnesses were present. This, though no more than truth, was of no consequence to her justification, to one determined to believe the worst; or, at least, to do so: miss Flora treated with contempt all she said on this score, detected her imprecations, and to mortify her more, said to her, in a taunting manner: "Come, come, miss Betsy, 'tis a folly to think to impose upon the world by such shallow artifices: — what your inclinations are is evident enough; any one may see, that if it had not been for your brother's unseasonable interruption, no-body would ever have heard a word of those insults you now so heavily complain of."

Poor

Poor miss Betſy could not refrain letting fall ſome tears at ſo unjuſt and cruel an innuendo ; but the greatneſs of her ſpirit enabled her in a few moments to overcome the ſhock it had given her : ſhe returned reproaches with reproaches, and as ſhe had infinitely more of truth and reaſon on her ſide, had alſo much the better in this combat of tongues, nevertheleſs the other would not give out ; ſhe upbraided, and exaggerated, with the moſt malicious comments on it, every little indiſcretion miſs Betſy had been guilty of, repeated every cenſure which ſhe had heard the ill-natured part of the world paſs upon her conduct, and added many more, the invention of her own fertile brain.

Some ladies they had made acquaintance with in town coming to viſit them, put an end to the debate ; but neither being able preſently to forget the bitter reflections caſt on her by the other, both remained extremely ſullen the whole night, and their mutual ill humour might poſſibly have laſted much longer, but for an accident more material, which took off their attention, as it might have produced much worſe conſequences than any quarrel between themſelves could be attended with. It happened in this manner :

The

The brother of miss Betsy was of a fiery disposition, and though those who were entrusted with the care of his education, were not wanting in their pains to correct this propensity, which they thought would be the more unbecoming in him, as he was intended for the pulpit, yet did not their endeavours for that purpose meet with all the success they wished. Nature may be moderated, but never can be wholly changed, the seeds of wrath still remained in his soul, nor could the rudiments that had been given him be sufficient to hinder them from springing into action, when urged by any provocation. The treatment his sister had received from the gentleman-commoner, seemed to him so insupportable, that he thought he ought not, without great submissions on the part of the transgressor, be prevailed upon to put it up.

The first step he took was to sound the young student, as to what he knew relating to the affair, who freely told him, as miss Betsy herself had done, where they met the ladies; and the manner in which they went into the house; protesting, that neither himself, nor according to the best of his belief, the gentleman-commoner, had

had at that time any designs in view, but meer complaisance and gallantry.

“ How then came you to separate yourselves?” cried mr. Francis, with some earnestness. “ That also was accidental,” replied the other: “ your sister’s companion telling me, she liked the garden better than the room we were in, I thought I could do no less than attend her thither. I confess I did not consult whether those we left behind had any inclination to follow us or not.”

The air with which he spoke of this part of the adventure, had something in it, which did not give mr. Francis the most favourable idea of miss Flora’s conduct; but that not much concerning him, and finding nothing wherewith he could justly reproach the student, he soon after quitted him, and went to the gentleman-commoner, having been told he might find him in his rooms.

Had any one been witness of the manner in which these two accosted each other, they would not have been at a loss to guess what would ensue: the brother of miss Betsey came with a mind full of resentment, and determined to repair the affront had been offered to him in

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 99

person of a sister, who was very dear to him, by calling the other to a severe account for what he had done. The gentleman-commoner was descended of a noble family, had an estate to support the dignity of his birth, and was too much puffed up and insolent on the smiles of fortune : he was conscious the affront he had given demanded satisfaction, and neither doubted of the errand on which Mr. Francis was come, nor wondered at it ; but could not bring himself to acknowledge he had done amiss, nor think of making any excuse for his behaviour. Guilt in a proud heart is generally accompanied with a fullen obstinacy ; for, as the poet says,

“ Forgiveness to the injur’d does be-
“ long ;

“ But they ne’er pardon who have done
“ the wrong.”

He, therefore, received the interrogatories Mr. Francis was beginning to make, with an air rather indignant than complying ; which the other not being able to suffer, such hot words arose between them, which could not but occasion a challenge, which was given by Mr. Francis. An appointment to meet was the next day at six o’clock, and the place,

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that

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that very field in which the gentleman-commoner, and his friend had so unluckily happened to meet the ladies in their morning's walk.

Neither of them wanted courage, nor communicated their rendezvous to any one person, in hope of being disappointed without danger of their honour ; but each being equally animated with the ambition of humbling the arrogance of the other, both were secret as to the business, and no less punctual as to the time.

The agreement between them was sword and pistol, which both having provided themselves with, they no sooner came within a proper distance, than they discharged at each other, the first course of this fatal entertainment ; that of the gentleman-commoner was so well aimed, that one of the bullets lodged in the shoulder, and the other grazing on the fleshy part of the arm of his antagonist, put him into a great deal of pain ; but these wounds rather increased than diminished the fury he was possessed of ; he instantly drew his sword, and ran at the other with so well-directed a force, that his weapon entered three inches deep into the right side of the gentleman-commoner ; both of them received several other blows, yet still both continued the fight.

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 101

equal vehemence, nor would either of them, in all probability, have receded, till one or other of them had lain dead upon the place, if some countrymen, who by accident were passing that way, had not with their clubs beat down the swords of both, and carried the owners of them by meer force into the village they were going to, where they were no sooner entered, than several people who knew them, seeing them pass by in this manner, covered all over with their own blood, and guarded by a pack of rustics, ran out to enquire what had happened, which being informed of, they took them out of the hands of these men, and provided proper apartments for them.

By this time they were both extremely faint through the anguish of their wounds, and the great effusion of blood that had issued from them. Surgeons were immediately sent for, who on examining their hurts, pronounced none of them to be mortal, yet such as would require some time for cure.

Mr. Francis suffered extreme torture in having the bullet extracted from his shoulder, yet notwithstanding that, and the weak condition he was in, he made a firm support him in his bed, while he

scrawled out these few lines to his sister ;
which, as soon as finished, were carried
to her by the same person.

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

“ *My dear sister,*

“ I HAVE endangered my life, and am
“ now confined to my bed, by the
“ wounds I have received, in endeavour-
“ ing to revenge your quarrel : do not
“ think I tell you this by way of re-
“ proach ; for, I assure you, would the
“ circumstance of the affair have permit-
“ ted it to have been concealed, you ne-
“ ver should have known it.

“ I should be glad to see you, but
“ think it not proper that you should
“ come to me, ’till I hear what is said
“ concerning this matter. I shall send
“ to you every day ; and that, you will
“ be perfectly easy, is the earnest request
“ of,

“ Dear Betsy,

“ Your most affectionate brother,

“ And humble servant,

“ F. THOUGHTLESS.”

The young ladies were that morning at breakfast in the parlour, with the gentlewoman of the house, when the maid came running in, and told her mistress, she had heard, in a shop where she had been, of a sad accident that had just happened : “ Two gentlemen,” cried she, “ of the university have been fighting, and almost killed one another ; and they say,” continued she, “ it was about a young lady, that one of them attempted to ravish.”

Miss Betsy and miss Flora, at this intelligence, looked at each other with a good deal of confusion, already beginning to suspect who the persons were, and how deeply themselves, one of them especially, was interested in this misfortune. The gentlewoman asked her servant, if she knew the names of those who fought : “ No, madam,” answered she, “ I could not learn that, as yet ; but the people in the street are all talking of it, and I do not doubt but I shall hear the whole story the next time I go out.”

The good gentlewoman, little imagining how much her guests were concerned in what she spoke, could not now forbear lamenting the ungovernableness of youth ;

the heedless levities of the one sex, and the mad-brained passions of the other. The persons to whom she directed this discourse would not, at another time, have given much ear to it, or perhaps have replied to it with raillery; but the occasion of it now put both of them in too serious a temper to offer any interruption, and she was still going on, inveighing against the follies and vices of the age, when miss Betsy received the above letter from her brother, which confirmed all those alarming conjectures the maid's report had raised in her mind.

The mistress of the house perceiving the young man, who brought the letter, came upon business to the ladies, had the good manners to leave the room, that they might talk with the greater freedom. Miss Betsy asked a thousand questions, but he was able to inform her of no farther particulars, than what the letter contained.

The moment he was gone, she ran up to her chamber, threw herself upon the bed, and, in a flood of tears, gave a loose to the most poignant vexation she had ever yet experienced. Miss Flora followed, and seeing her in this condition, thought she could do no less, in decency

than contribute every thing in her power for her consolation.

By the behaviour of this young lady, in other respects, however, the reader will easily perceive it was more through policy than real good-nature, she treated her afflicted companion with the tenderness she now did: she knew, that it was not by an open quarrel with miss Betsy she could wreak any part of the spite she had conceived against her, and was therefore glad to lay hold of this opportunity of being reconciled.

“ I was afraid, my dear,” said she, “ that it would come to this, and that “ put me into so great a passion with you “ yesterday, for telling mr. Francis any “ thing of the matter: the men are such “ creatures, that there is no trusting them “ with any thing; but come,” continued she, kissing her cheek, “ don’t grieve and “ torment yourself in this manner, you “ find there is no danger of death on “ either side, and as for the rest it will “ all blow off in time.” Miss Betsy said little to this, the sudden passion of her “ must have its vent; but when that over, she began to listen to the voice of comfort, and, by degrees, to resume natural vivacity, not foreseeing that
F 5 this

this unhappy adventure would lay her under mortifications, which to a person of her spirit were very difficult to be borne.



CHAP. X.

Gives the catastrophe of the Oxford ramble, and in what manner the young ladies returned to London.

IF the wounds mr. Francis had received had been all the misfortune attending miss Betsy in this adventure, it is probable, that as she every day heard he was in a fair way of recovering, the first gust of passion would have been all she had sustained; but she soon found other consequences arising from it, which were no less afflicting, and more galling to her pride.

The quarrel between the two young gentlemen, and the occasion of it, was presently blazed over the whole town; it spread like wild-fire, every one made their several comments upon it, and few there were who endeavoured to find any excuses for the share miss Betsy and miss Flora had in it.

The ladies of Oxford are commonly more than ordinarily circumspect in their behaviour, as indeed it behoves them to be, in a place where there are such a number of young gentlemen, many of whom pursue pleasure more than study, and scruple nothing for the gratification of their desires. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that being from their infancy trained up in the most strict reserve, and accustomed to be upon their guard, against even the most distant approaches of the other sex, they should be apt to pass the severest censures on a conduct, which they had been always taught to look upon as the sure destruction of reputation, and frequently fatal to innocence and virtue.

This being pretty generally the characteristic of those ladies, who were of any distinction, in Oxford, miss Betsy and miss Flora immediately found, that while they continued there, they must either be content to sit at home alone, or converse only with such as were as disagreeable to them, as they had now rendered themselves to those of a more unblemished fame.

They had received several visits, all of which they had not yet had time or leisure to return ; but now going to pay the debt, which complaisance demanded from them, they were denied access at every place they went to : all the persons were either abroad or indisposed ; but the manner in which these answers were given, easily convinced miss Betsey and miss Flora, that they were no more than meer pretences to avoid seeing them. In the public walks, and in passing through the streets, they saw themselves shunned even to a degree of rudeness : those of their acquaintance, who were obliged to meet them, looked another way, and went hastily on without vouchsafing a salute.

This was the treatment their late unhappy adventure drew on them, from those of their own sex, nor did those of the other seem to behave to them with greater tenderness or respect, especially the younger students, who all having got the story, thought they had a fine opportunity of exercising their poetic talent ; satires and lampoons flew about like hail : many of these anonymous compositions were directed to miss Betsey, and thrown over the rails into the area of the house where she lodged ; others were sung under her windows.

dows by persons in disguise, and copies of them handed about through the whole town, to the great propagation of scandal, and the sneering faculty.

Never, certainly, did pride and vanity meet with a more severe humiliation, than what these witticisms inflicted on those, who by their inconsiderate behaviour had laid themselves open to them. Neither the assurance of miss Flora, nor the great spirit of miss Betsy, could enable them to stand the shock of those continual affronts, which every day presented them with. They dreaded to expose themselves to fresh insults, if they stirred out of the doors, and at home they were persecuted with the unwearied remonstrances of their grave landlady, so that their condition was truly pitiable.

Both of them were equally impatient to get out of a place where they found their company was held in so little estimation; but miss Betsy thought her brother would not take it well, should she go to London, and leave him in the condition he then was. Miss Flora's importunities, however, joined to the new occasions she every day had for increasing her discontent on saying, got the better of her apprehensions,

sions, and she wrote to her brother in the following terms :

TO MR. FRANCIS THOUGHTLESS.

“ *Dear brother,*

“ **T**HOUGH I am not to my great
 “ affliction permitted to see you, or
 “ offer that assistance might be expected
 “ from a sister in your present situation ;
 “ yet I cannot, without the extremest re-
 “ gret, resolve to quit Oxford, before
 “ you are perfectly recovered of those
 “ hurts you have received on my account.
 “ However, as by your judging it im-
 “ proper for me to come to you, I can-
 “ not suppose you are wholly unacquaint-
 “ ed with the severe usage lately given
 “ me, and must look on every affront of-
 “ fered to me as an indignity to you, I
 “ am apt to flatter myself you will not
 “ be offended, that I wish to remove from
 “ a place, where innocence is no defence
 “ against scandal, and the shew of virtue
 “ more considered than the reality.

“ Nevertheless, I shall determine no-
 “ thing, till I hear your sentiments,
 “ which, if I find conformable to mine,
 “ shall set out for London with all pos-
 “ sible expedition. I would very fain see
 “ you before I go, and, if you consent,

“ will

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. III

“ will come to you so muffled up, as not to
“ be known, by any who may happen to
“ meet me. I shall expect your answer
“ with the utmost impatience, being,

“ My dear brother,

“ By friendship, as well as blood,

“ Most affectionately yours,

“ E. THOUGHTLESS.”

When this letter was dispatched, miss Flora made use of all the arguments she was mistress of, in order to persuade miss Betsy to go for London, even in case her brother should not be altogether so willing for it, as she wished he would. Miss Betsy, though no less eager than herself to be out of a place she now so much detested, would not be prevailed upon to promise any thing on this score; but persisted in her resolution of being wholly directed how to proceed, by the answer she should receive from mr. Francis.

Miss Flora was so fretted at this perverseness, as she called it, that she told her, in a very great pet, that she might stay if she pleased, and be the laughing-stock of the town; but, for her own part, she had more spirit, and would be gone the

the next day. Miss Betsey coolly replied, that if she thought proper to do so, she was doubtless at liberty ; but believed Mr. Goodman, and even lady Mellasin herself, would look on such a behaviour, as neither consistent with generosity, or common good manners.

It is indeed scarce probable, that the other had the least intention to do as she had said, though she still continued to threaten it, in the most positive and peremptory terms ; and this, if we consider the temper of both these young ladies, we may reasonably suppose, might have occasioned a second quarrel between them, if the servant, whom Mr. Francis always sent to his sister, had not that instant come in, and put an end to the dispute, by delivering a letter to Miss Betsey, which she hastily opening, found it contained these lines :

To Miss THOUGHTLESS.

“ My dear sister,

*“ IT is with an inexpressible satisfaction
 “ that I find your own inclinations
 “ have anticipated the request I was just
 “ about to make you. I do assure you,
 “ this*

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 113

“ the moment I received your letter, I
“ was going to write, in order to per-
“ swade you to do the very thing you
“ seem to desire. Oxford is indeed a very
“ censorious place ; I have always ob-
“ served it to be so, and have fre-
“ quently told the ladies, between jest and
“ earnest, that I thought it was a town
“ of the most scandal, and least sin, of
“ any in the world. I am pretty confi-
“ dent some of those, who pretend to give
“ themselves airs concerning you and
“ miss Flora, are as perfectly convinced
“ of your innocence as I myself am ; yet
“ after all that has happened, I would
“ not have you think of staying ; and the
“ sooner you depart the better : you need
“ be under no apprehensions on account
“ of my wounds ; those I received from
“ the sword of my antagonist are in a
“ manner healed, and that with the pistol
“ shot, in my shoulder, is in as fine a
“ way as can be expected, in so short a
“ time. Those I had the fortune to give
“ him, are in yet a better condition ; so
“ that I believe, if it was not for the over-
“ caution of our surgeon, we might both
“ quit our rooms to-morrow. I hear that
“ our grave superiors have had some con-
“ sultations on our duel, and that there
“ is a talk of our being both expelled ;
“ but,

“ but, for my part, I shall certainly save
“ them the trouble, and quit the univer-
“ sity of my own accord, as soon as my
“ recovery is compleated: my genius is
“ by no means adapted to the study of
“ divinity; I think the care of my own
“ soul more than sufficient for me, with-
“ out taking upon me the charge of a
“ whole parish: you may, therefore, ex-
“ pect to see me shortly at London, as it
“ is highly necessary I should consult mr.
“ Goodman concerning my future settle-
“ ment in the world. I should be ex-
“ tremely glad of a visit from you before
“ you leave Oxford, more especially as I
“ have something of moment to say to
“ you, which I do not choose to com-
“ municate by letter; but cannot think
“ it at all proper, for particular reasons,
“ that you should come to me, some or
“ other of the gentlemen being perpetu-
“ ally dropping into my chamber; and
“ it is impossible for you to disguise your-
“ self so as not to be distinguished by
“ young fellows, whose curiosity would be
“ the more excited, by your endeavours to
“ conceal yourself. As this might revive
“ the discourse of an affair, which I could
“ wish might be buried in an eternal ob-
“ livion, must desire you will defer the
“ satisfaction you propose to give me, till
“ we meet at London, to which I wish
“ you

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 115

“ you, and your fair companion, a safe
“ and pleasant journey. I am,

“ With the greatest tenderness,

“ My dear sister,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ F. THOUGHTLESS.”

The receipt of this letter gave an infinity of contentment to miss Betsy; she had made the offer of going to take her leave of him, chiefly with the view of keeping him from suspecting she wanted natural affection, and was no less pleased with his refusing the request she made him on that account, than she was with his so readily agreeing to her returning to London. Miss Flora was equally delighted; they sent their footman that instant to take places in the stage-coach, and early the next morning set out from a place, which, on their entering into it, they did not imagine they should quit, either so soon, or with so little regret.



CHAP.

C H A P. XI.

Lays a foundation for many events to be produced by time, and waited for with patience.

MISS Betfy, and miss Flora, on their coming home, were in some perplexity how to relate the story of their Oxford adventure to lady Mellasin and mr. Goodman; and it is very likely they would have thought proper to have kept it a secret, if the unlucky duel between mr. Francis, and the gentleman-commoner, which they were sensible would be a known thing, had not rendered the concealment of the whole utterly impracticable.

As there was no remedy, miss Flora took upon her to lay open the matter to her mamma; which she did with so much artifice, that if that lady had been as austere, as she was really the reverse, she could not have found much to condemn, either in the conduct of her daughter, or miss Betfy: as to mr. Goodman, he left the whole management of the young ladies in these particulars, entirely to his wife, so said little to them on their share of

adventure; but was extremely concerned for the part Mr. Francis had in it, as he supposed it was chiefly owing to that unlucky incident, that he had taken a resolution to leave the college; and he very well knew, that a certain nobleman, who was a distant relation of his family, and godfather to Mr. Francis, had always promised to bestow a large benefice, in his gift, upon him, as soon as he should have compleated his studies.

This honest guardian thought he should be wanting in the duty of the trust reposed in him, to suffer his charge to throw away that fine prospect in his view, if by any means he could prevent him from taking so rash and inconsiderate a step: and as to his being expelled, he doubted not, but, between him and Sir Ralph, interest might be made to the heads of the university, to get the affair of the duel passed over. The greatest difficulty he had to apprehend, in compassing this point, was from the young gentleman himself, who he had observed was of a temper somewhat obstinate, and tenacious of his own opinions. Solving, however, to try all means possible, he wrote immediately to him, relating to him, in the strongest and pathetic terms he was master of, the advantages the clergy enjoyed, the respect

respect they had from all degrees of people, and endeavoured to convince him, that there was no avocation whatever, by which a younger brother might so easily advance his fortune, and do honour to his family.

He also sent a letter to sir Ralph Trusty, acquainting him with the whole story, and earnestly requesting, that he would write to mr. Francis, and omit nothing that might engage him to desist from doing a thing so contrary to his interest, and the intentions of his deceased father, as what he now had thoughts of doing was manifestly so. These efforts, by both the guardians, were often repeated; but without the least success: the young gentleman found arguments to oppose against theirs, which neither of them could deny to have weight, particularly that of his having no call to take upon him holy orders. During these debates, in which miss Betsy gave herself no manner of concern, she received a letter from her brother, containing these lines:

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

My dear sister,

‘ **THOUGH** I flatter myself all my
 ‘ letters afford you some sort of sa-
 ‘ tisfaction, yet by what little judgment
 ‘ I have been able to form of the to-

‘ per of your sex, have reason to believe,
‘ this I now send will meet a double por-
‘ tion of welcome from you. It brings
‘ a confirmation of your beauty’s power;
‘ the intelligence of a new conquest; the
‘ offer of a heart, which, if you will trust
‘ a brother’s recommendation, is well de-
‘ serving your acceptance: but, that I
‘ may not seem to speak in riddles, you
‘ may remember, that the first time I
‘ had the pleasure of entertaining you at
‘ my rooms, a gentleman called Truworth,
‘ was with us, and that the next day, when
‘ you dined with that person, who after-
‘ wards treated you with such unbecoming
‘ liberties, he made one of the company;
‘ since then you could not see him, as he
‘ was obliged to go to his seat, which is
‘ about thirty miles off, on an extraordi-
‘ nary occasion, and returned not till the
‘ day after you left this town. He seem-
‘ ed more than ordinarily affected, on my
‘ telling him what had happened, on your
‘ account, and after pausing a little, ‘ How
“ unhappy was I,” said he, ‘ to be absent!
“ had I been here, there would have been
no need for the brother of miss Betsy
“ to have exposed his life to the sword of
“ an injurious antagonist, or his character
“ to the censure of the university. I
“ would have taken upon myself to have
“ managed the quarrel of that amiable
“ lady,

“ lady, and either have severely chastise
 “ the insolence of the aggressor, or lo
 “ the best part of my blood in the a
 “ tempt.’ I was very much surprized
 “ these words, as well as at the emphat
 “ with which they were delivered; b
 “ recovering myself as soon as I coul
 “ We are extremely obliged to you, si
 “ said I; ‘ but I know not if such a mi
 “ taken generosity, might not have be
 “ fatal to the reputation of us both. Wh
 “ would the world have said of me
 “ have been tamely passive, and suff
 “ another to revenge the affront offer
 “ to my sister? What would they ha
 “ thought of her, on finding her hono
 “ vindicated by one who had no conce
 “ in it?’ ‘ No concern!’ cried he, wi
 “ the utmost eagerness; ‘ yes, I have
 “ concern, more deep, more strong, th
 “ that of father, brother, or all the t
 “ of blood could give; and that you h
 “ before now have been convinced of, h
 “ I not been so suddenly and so unfor
 “ nately called hence.’

‘ Perceiving I looked very much co
 ‘ founded, as well I might, ‘ Ah! Fran
 ‘ cried he, ‘ I love your charming sist
 “ my friends have, for these six mon
 “ past, been teasing me to think of m
 “ riage, and several proposals have
 “ m

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 121

“ made to me on that score ; but never,
“ ’till I saw the amiable miss Betsy, did
“ I behold the face for whom I would
“ exchange my liberty : in fine, ’tis she,
“ and only she, can make me blest ; and
“ I returned to Oxford full of the hopes
“ of an opportunity to lay my heart, my
“ person, and my fortune at her feet.”

‘ It would require a volume instead of
‘ a letter, to repeat half the tender and
‘ passionate expressions he uttered in your
‘ favour. What I have already said is
‘ enough to give you a specimen of the
‘ rest. I shall only add, that being im-
‘ patient to begin the attack he is deter-
‘ mined to make upon your heart, he is
‘ preparing to follow you to London with
‘ all possible expedition. I once had
‘ thoughts of accompanying him, but
‘ have since thought it proper to have sir
‘ Ralph Trusty’s advice in something I
‘ have a mind to do, and for that pur-
‘ pose shall take a journey into L ———e,
‘ as soon as I receive remittances from mr.
‘ Goodman, to pay off some trifling debts
‘ I have contracted here, and defray my
‘ travelling expences ; so that, if things
‘ happen as I wish they may, my friend’s
‘ passion will have made a considerable
‘ progress before I see you.

I.

G

‘ In-

' Indeed, my dear sister, if you ha
 ' not already seen a man whose per
 ' you like better, you can never have
 ' offer that promises more felicity :
 ' left the college soon after I came in
 ' it, beloved and respected by all t
 ' knew him, for his discreet behavior
 ' humanity, and affability : he went aft
 ' wards on his travels, and brought ho
 ' with him all the accomplishments of
 ' several countries he had been in, wi
 ' out being the least tainted with the vi
 ' or fopperies of any of them : he ha
 ' much larger estate than your fortu
 ' could expect, unincumbered with del
 ' mortgages, or poor relations : his fa
 ' ly is ancient, and, by the mother's fi
 ' honourable ; but, above all, he has ser
 ' honour, and good nature,—rare qualiti
 ' which, in my opinion, cannot fail
 ' making him an excellent husband, wh
 ' ever he comes to be such.

' But I shall leave him to plead his c
 ' cause, and you to follow your incli
 ' tions. I am,

' With the most unfeigned good wishe

' My dear sister,

' Your affectionate brother,

' And humble servant

' F. THOUGHTFUL

' P.S. Mr. Truworth knows nothing of
' my writing to you in his behalf, so
' you are at liberty to receive him as
' you shall think proper.'

Miss Betsy required no less a cordial than this, to revive her spirits, pretty much depressed since her ill usage at Oxford.

She had not time, however, to indulge the pleasure of reflecting on this new triumph, on her first receiving the news of it. Lady Mellafin had set that evening apart to make a grand visit to a person of her acquaintance, who was just married; the young ladies were to accompany her, and miss Betsy was in the midst of the hurry of dressing, when the post brought the letter, so she only looked it carelessly over, and locked it in her cabinet till she should have more leisure for the examination.—

My were all ready, the coach with the hammock-cloth and harnesses was at door, and only waited while Mrs. was drawing on her lady's gloves, happened to be a little too strait.

'ucky instant one of the foot-
...nning into the parlour, and
Mellafin, that there was a very

ill-looking woman at the door, who enquired for her ladyship, said she must needs speak with her, and that she had a letter to deliver, which she would give into nobody's hand but her own. Lady Mellasin seemed a little angry at the insolence and folly of the creature, as she then termed it; but ordered she should be shewed into the back parlour: they were not above five minutes together, before the woman went away, and lady Mellasin returned to the room where miss Betsy and miss Flora were waiting for her. A confusion not to be described sat on every feature in her face, she looked pale, she trembled, and having told the young ladies something had happened, which prevented her going where she intended, flew up into her dressing-room, followed by mrs. Prinks, who appeared very much alarmed at seeing her ladyship in this disorder.

Miss Betsy and miss Flora were also surprised, and doubtless had their own conjectures upon this sudden turn. 'Tis not likely, however, that either of them, especially miss Betsy, could hit upon the right; but whatever their thoughts were, they communicated them not to each other, and seemed only intent on considering in what manner they should dispose of

selves that evening, it not being proper they should make the visit above mentioned without her ladyship. As they were discoursing on this head, mrs. Prinks came down, and having ordered the coach to put up, and sent a footman to call a hack, ran up stairs again, in a great hurry, to her lady.

In less time than could almost be imagined they both came down ; lady Mellan had pulled off her rich apparel, and mobbed herself up in a cloak and hood, that little of her face, and nothing of her air, could be distinguished : the two young ladies stared, and were confounded at this metamorphosis. “ Is your ladyship going out in that dress,” cried miss Flora ; but miss Betsey said nothing. “ Aye, child,” replied the lady, somewhat faltering in her speech, “ a poor relation, who they say is dying, has sent to beg to see me.” She said no more, the hackney-coach was come, her ladyship and mrs. Prinks stepped hastily into it ; the latter, in doing so, telling the coachman, in so a voice, as no-body but himself could — what place he was to drive.

They were gone, miss Flora pro-
-ing in the park, but miss Betsy
men to be in a humour to go,
G 3 either

either there or any where else, at that time, on which the other told her, she had got the spleen; but said she, "I am resolved not to be infected with it, so you must not take it ill if I leave you alone for a few hours; for I should think it a sin against common-sense, to sit moping at home without shewing myself to any one soul in the world, after having taken all this pains in dressing." Miss Betsey assured her, as she might do with a great deal of sincerity, that she should not be at all displeased to be entirely free from any company whatsoever for the whole evening; and to prove the truth of what she said, gave orders that instant to be denied to whoever should come to visit her. "Well," cried miss Flora, laughing, "I shall give your compliments, however, where I am going," and then mentioned the names of some persons she had just then taken into her head to visit. "As you please for that," replied miss Betsey, with the same gay air; "but don't tell them it is because I am eaten up with the vapours, that I choose to stay at home rather than carry my compliments in person; for if ever I find out," continued she, "that you are so mischievous, I shall contrive some way or other to be revenged on you."

They talked to each other in this pleasant manner, 'till a chair miss Flora had sent for was brought into the hall, in which she seated herself for her intended ramble, and miss Betsy went into her chamber, where how she was amused will presently be shewn.

CH A P. XII.

Is little more than a continuance of the former.

MISS Betsy had no sooner disengaged herself from the incumbrance of a formal dress, and put on one more light and easy, al fresco, as the Spaniards phrase it, than she began to give her brother's letter a more serious and attentive perusal, than she had the opportunity of doing before.

She was charmed and elated with the description Mr. Francis had told her, she had inspired in the breast of his friend, she called to her mind the idea of those persons who were present at the entertainments he mentioned, and easily recollected which was most likely to be the lover,

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though she remembered not the name: she very well now remembered there was one that seemed both times to regard her with glances, which had somewhat peculiar in them, and which then she had interpreted as the certain indications of feeling something in his heart of the nature her brother had described; but not seeing him afterwards, nor hearing any mention made of him, at least that she took notice of, the imagination went out of her head.

This account of him, however, brought to her memory every thing she had observed concerning him, and was very well convinced she had seen nothing, either in his person or deportment, that was not perfectly agreeable; yet notwithstanding all this, and the high encomiums given of him by a brother, who she knew would not deceive her, she was a little vexed to find herself pressed by one so dear, and so nearly related to her, to think of him as a man she ever intended to marry: she thought she could be pleased to have such a lover, but could not bring herself to be content that he ever should be a husband. She had too much good sense not to know it suited not with the condition of a wife to indulge herself in the gaieties she at present did, which she

innocent, and, as she thought, becoming enough in the present state she now was, might not be altogether pleasing to one, who, if he so thought proper, had the power of restraining them. In fine, she looked upon a serious behaviour as unsuitable to one of her years, and therefore resolved not to enter into a condition, which demanded some share of it, at least for a long time ; that is, when she should be grown weary of the admiration, flatteries, and addresses of the men, and no longer found any pleasure in seeing herself preferred before all the women of her acquaintance.

Though it is certain, that few young handsome ladies are without some share of the vanity here described, yet it is to be hoped, there are not many who are possessed of it in that immoderate degree *Miss Betsy* was. It is, however, for the sake of those who are so, that these pages are wrote, to the end they may use their utmost endeavours to correct that error, as they will find it so fatal to the happiness of one, who had scarce any other remarkable propensity in her whole com-

ing lady was full of meditations
conquest, and the manner in

which she should receive the victim, who was so shortly to prostrate himself at the shrine of her beauty, when she heard some body run hastily up stairs, and go into lady Mellasin's dressing-room, which being, as has been already taken notice of, on a very remarkable occasion, she stepped out of the chamber to see who was there, and found mrs. Prinks very busy at a cabinet, where her lady's Jewels were always kept : " So, mrs. Prinks," said she, " is my lady come home ?" " No, miss," replied the other, " her ladyship is certainly the most compassionate best woman in the world ; her cousin is very bad indeed, and she has sent me for a bottle of reviving drops, which I am going back to carry." With these words she shuffled something into her pocket, and having locked the cabinet again, went out of the room, saying, " Your servant, miss Betsey, I cannot stay, for life's at stake."

This put miss Betsey in the greatest consternation imaginable ; she knew lady Mellasin could have no drops in that Cabinet, unless they were contained in a phial of no larger circumference than a thimble, the drawers of it being very shallow, and made only to hold rings, croceats, necklaces, and such other flat trinkets :

thou

thought there was something very odd, and extraordinary in the whole affair. A strange woman coming in so abrupt a manner, — her refusing to give the letter to any one but lady Mellasin herself, — her ladyship's confusion at the receipt of it, — her disguising herself, and going out with Prinks in that violent hurry, — the latter being sent home, — her taking something out of the casket, and her going back again; all these incidents, I say, when put together, denoted something of a mystery not easily penetrated into.

Miss Betsy, however, was not of a disposition to think too much, or too deeply, on those things, which the most nearly concerned herself, much less on such as related entirely to other people; and miss Flora coming home soon after, and relating what conversation had passed in the visits she had been making, and the dresses the several ladies had on, and such other trifling matters, diverted the other from those serious reflections, which might otherwise, perhaps, have lasted somewhat longer.

When miss Flora was undressed, they went down together into the parlour, where they found mr. Goodman extremely uneasy, that lady Mellasin was not come

home : he had been told in what manner she went out, and it now being grown dark, he was frighted lest any ill accident should befall her, as she had no manservant, nor any one with her but her woman, whom, he said, he could not look on as a sufficient guard for a lady of quality, against those insults, which night, and the libertinism of the age, frequently produced.

This tender husband asked the young ladies a thousand questions, concerning the possibility of guessing to whom, and to what part of the town, she was gone, in order that he might go himself, or send a servant, to conduct her safely home ; but neither of them were able to inform him any thing farther, than what has been already related ; that she had been sent for to a sick relation, who, as it appeared to them, had been very pressing to engage her ladyship to that charitable office.

Mr. Goodman then began to endeavour to recollect the names and places of abode, of all those he had ever heard her say were of her kindred, for she had never suffered any of them to come to the house, under pretence that some of them had not behaved well, and that others being fallen to decay, and poor, might expect favours from her, and that she would suffer no
body

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body belonging to her to be burthenfome
to him.

He was, notwithstanding, about to fend
his men in search of his beloved lady,
though he knew not where to direct them to
go, when she and mrs. Prinks came home :
he received her with all the transports a
man of his years could be capable of,
but gently chid her for the little care she
had taken of herself, and looking on her,
as mrs. Prinks was pulling off her hood,
“ Bless me, my dear,” said he, “ what
“ was your fancy for going out in such
“ a dress ?” “ My cousin,” replied she,
“ is in very wretched circumstances, lives
“ in a little mean lodging, and, besides,
“ owes money ; if I had gone any thing
“ like myself, the people of the house
“ might have expected great things from
“ me. I am very compassionate, indeed,
“ to every one under misfortunes, but
“ will never squander mr. Goodman’s
“ money for their relief.”

“ I know thou art all goodness,” said
the old gentleman, kissing her with the
utmost tenderness ; “ but something,”
continued he, “ methinks, might be spar-
“ ed.” “ Leave it to me, mr. Goodman,”
answered she, “ I know best, — they have
“ not deserved it from me :” She then
told

told a long story, how kind she had been to this cousin, and some others of her kindred in her first husband's time, and gave some instances of the ill use they had made of her bounties. All she said had so much the appearance of truth, that even miss Betsy, who was far from having an high opinion of her sincerity, believed it, and thought no farther of what had passed; she had indeed, in a short time, sufficient business of her own to take up all her mind.

Mr. Goodman, the very next day, brought home a very agreeable young gentleman to dine with him, who, though he paid an extraordinary respect to lady Mellasin, and treated her daughter with the utmost complaisance, yet in the compliments he made to miss Betsy, there was something which seemed to tell her she had inspired him with a passion more tender than bare respect, and more sincere than common complaisance.

She had very penetrating eyes this way, and never made a conquest without knowing she did so; she was not, therefore, wanting in all those little artifices she had but too much made her study, in order to fix the impression she had given this stranger as indelible as possible: this she had a very good opportunity for doing;

he stayed the whole afternoon, drank tea with the ladies, and left them not, 'till a crowd of company coming in, he thought good manners obliged him to retire.

Miss Betsey was filled with the most impatient curiosity to know the name and character of this person, whom she had already set down in her mind as a new adorer: she asked miss Flora when they were going to bed, as if it were a matter of indifference to her, and meerly for the sake of chat, who that gentleman was who had dined with them, and made so long a visit; but that young lady had never seen him before, and was as ignorant of every thing concerning him, as herself.

Miss Betsey, however, lost no part of her repose that night, on this account, as she doubted not but she should very soon be informed by himself of all she wished to know: she was but just out of bed the next morning, when a maid-servant came into the chamber, and delivered a letter to her, which she told her was brought by a porter, who waited for an answer.

Miss Betsey's heart fluttered at the mention of a letter, flattering herself it came from the person, who at present engrossed her thoughts; but on taking it from the maid,

maid, found a woman's hand on the superscription, and one perfectly known to her, though that instant she could not reflect to whom it belonged: she was a good deal surprised, when on breaking the seal she found it came from miss Forward, with whom, as well as the rest of the boarding-school ladies, she had ceased all correspondence for many months. The contents were these:

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

“ *Dear miss Betsy,*

“ **T**HOUGH since I had the pleasure
 “ of seeing or hearing from you, so
 “ many accidents, and odd turns of for-
 “ tune, have happened to me, as might
 “ very well engross my whole attention;
 “ yet I cannot be so far forgetful of our
 “ former friendship, as to be in the same
 “ town with you, without letting you
 “ know, and desiring to see you. Were
 “ there a possibility of my waiting on you,
 “ I certainly should have made you the
 “ first visit; but alas! at present there is
 “ not.—Oh! miss Betsy, I have strange
 “ things to tell you;—things fit only to
 “ be trusted to a person whose generosity
 “ and good-nature I have experienced.
 “ If therefore you are so good to come, I
 “ must intreat you will bring no compa-

“ *ny*

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 137

“ nion with you, and also that you will
“ allow me that favour the first leisure
“ hour; because I am in some hopes of
“ returning to L—e in a short time.
“ Please to enquire for the house of one
“ mrs. Nightshade, in Chick-lane, near
“ Smithfield, where you will find her,
“ who, in spite of time, absence, and a
“ thousand perplexing circumstances, is

“ With the most tender regard,

“ My dear miss Betsy,

“ Your very sincere,

“ Though unfortunate, friend,

“ A. FORWARD.

“ P. S. Be so good to let me know, by a
“ line, whether I may flatter myself
“ with the hopes of seeing you, and
“ at what time.”

Though miss Betsy, through the hurry
of her own affairs, had neglected writing
to this young lady for a considerable time;
yet she was extremely pleased at hearing
from her: she could not imagine, how-
ever, what strange turns of fortune they
were she mentioned in her letter, and
which she supposed had brought her to
Lon-

London. Equally impatient to satisfy her curiosity in this point, as to see a person with whom she had contracted her first friendship, she took pen and paper and immediately wrote this answer :

To miss FORWARD.

“ *Dear miss* Forward,

“ **T**HE satisfaction of hearing you were
 “ so near me would be compleat,
 “ were it not allayed by the hints you
 “ give, that some accidents, not altogether
 “ pleasing, had occasioned it: I long
 “ to hear what has happened to you,
 “ since last we saw each other;” and will
 “ not fail to wait on you this afternoon.
 “ I know nothing of the part of the town
 “ you are in, but suppose a hackney-
 “ coach will be able to find its way. I
 “ will detain your messenger no longer,
 “ than to tell you that I am,

“ With the most perfect amity,

“ *Dear miss* Forward,

“ Your very affectionate friend,

“ And humble servant,

“ E. THOUGHTLESS.”

MISS

Miss Flora had not been present when the maid delivered the letter to Miss Betsy; but coming into the chamber just as she had finished, and was sealing up the answer to it: "So," said she, "have I caught you? Pray what new lover have you been writing to this morning?" It was in vain that Miss Betsy told her, she never yet had seen the man she thought worthy of a letter from her, on the score of love: the other persisted in her asseverations; and Miss Betsy to silence her railery was obliged to shew her some part of the letter she had received from Miss Forward.

It being near breakfast-time they went down together into the parlour, and as they were drinking their Coffee, "Well, pretty lady," said Mr. Goodman to Miss Betsy, with a smile, "how did you like the gentleman that dined here yesterday." This question so much surprised her, that she could not help blushing. "Like him, Sir," replied she, "I did not take any notice of him. — I remember a stranger was here, and staid a good while, and that is all; for I neither observed any thing he said, or did, or thought on him since." "The agreeable confusion," cried Mr. Goodman,

man, gaily, "you are in at my mention-
 "ing him, makes me believe you remarked
 "him more than you are willing to ac-
 "knowledge, and I am very glad of it.—
 "You do him but justice I assure you,
 "for he is very much in love with you.

"Lord, sir," said miss Betsey, blushing
 still more, "I cannot imagine what makes
 "you talk so; I don't suppose the man
 "thinks of me any more than I do of him.
 "That may be," rejoined he, laughing
 outright. Lady Mellasin then took up
 the word, and told her husband, he was
 very merry that morning. "Aye," said
 he, "the hurry of spirits I have put poor
 "miss Betsey in, has made me so; but I
 "can assure you the thing is very serious;
 "but," continued he, "you shall know
 "the whole of it."

He then proceeded to inform them,
 that the person, he had been speaking of,
 was the son of one who had formerly been
 a merchant; but who having acquired a
 large fortune by his industry, had for se-
 veral years past left off business, and lived
 mostly in the country; that the young
 gentleman had seen miss Betsey at St. Da-
 rehearsal, when they were all the
 the music; that the next day —
 had come to him at a coffee-house

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 141

it was known he frequented, and after asking many questions concerning miss Betsy, and hearing she was not engaged, declared he was very much charmed with her, and entreated his permission, as being her guardian, to make his addresses to her. Mr. Goodman remembered the affront he had received from alderman Saving on a like occasion, and was determined not to lay himself open to the same from mr. Staple, (for so he was called,) and plainly told the young lover, that he would encourage nothing of that sort, without the approbation of his father; that after this he had a meeting with the old gentleman, who being fully satisfied by him of miss Betsy's family, fortune, and character, had no objections to make against his son's inclinations. "Having this
"sanction," continued mr. Goodman,
"and believing it may be a very proper
"match for both of you, I brought
"him home with me to dinner yesterday, and should be glad to know how
"far you think you can approve of the
"before I give him my consent to
"take it."

"I have already told you, sir," replied Betsy, "that I took but little notice of the gentleman; — or, if I had, I never have asked myself the
"question,

“ question, whether I could like him or
 “ not ; for as to marriage, I do assure
 “ you, sir, it is a thing that has never
 “ yet entered into my head.” “ Nay, as
 “ to that,” returned he, “ it is time
 “ enough, indeed. — A good husband,
 “ however, can never come unseasonably.
 “ — I shall tell him, he may visit you,
 “ and leave you to answer the addresses
 “ according to the dictates of your heart.”

Miss Betsey neither opposed, nor gave consent to what her guardian said, on this score ; but her not refusing seemed to him a sufficient grant : so there passed nothing more, except some little pleasantries usual on such subjects.



CHAP. XIII.

Contains some part of the history of miss Forward's adventures, from the time of her leaving the boarding-school, as related by herself to miss Betsey.

MISS Betsey had now her head, though not her heart, full of the two new conquests she had made : mr. Truworth was strongly recommended by her brother

— mr. Staple by her guardian ; yet all the idea she had of either of them, served only to excite in her the pleasing imagination how, when they both came to address her, she should play the one against the other, and give herself a constant round of diversion, by their alternate contentment or disquiet. As the barometer, said she to herself, is governed by the weather, so is the man in love governed by the woman he admires : he is a meer machine, — acts nothing of himself, — has no will or power of his own, but is lifted up, or depressed, just as the charmer of his heart is in the humour. I wish, continued she, I knew what day these poor creatures would come, — though 'tis no matter, — I have got it seems possession of their hearts, and their eyes will find graces in me, let me appear in what shape soever.

These contemplations, however enchanting as they were to her vanity, did not render her forgetful of the promise she had made miss Forward, and, as soon as dinner was over, ordered a hackney-coach to be called, and went to the place miss Forward's letter had directed.

It is scarce possible for any one to be more surprised than she was, on entering the house of mrs. Nightshade. The father
of

of miss Forward was a gentleman of a large estate, and of great consideration in the county where he lived, and she expected to have seen his daughter in lodgings suitable to her birth and fortune: instead of which, she found herself conducted by an old ill-looking mean woman, who gave her to understand she was the mistress of the house, up two-pair-of-stairs, so narrow that she was obliged to hold her hoop quite under her arm, in order to gain the steep, and almost perpendicular ascent:—she was then shewed into a little dirty chamber, where on a wretched bed miss Forward lay in a most melancholly and dejected posture. “Here is a lady wants you,” said the hag, who ushered in miss Betsey. These words, and the opening the door, made miss Forward start from the bed to receive her visitor in the best manner she could: she saluted, and embraced her with all the demonstration of joy and affection; but miss Betsey was so confounded at the appearance of everything about her, that she was almost incapable of returning her caresses.

Miss Forward easily perceived the confusion her friend was in, and having led her to a chair, and seated herself near

“My dear miss Betsey,” said she, “not wonder you are alarmed

“ing me in a condition so different from
“what you might have expected: my let-
“ter indeed gave you a hint of some mis-
“fortunes that had befallen me; but I
“forbore letting you know of what na-
“ture they were, because the facts, with-
“out the circumstances, which would have
“been too long to communicate by writ-
“ing, might have made me appear more
“criminal, than I flatter myself you will
“think I really am, when you shall be
“told the whole of my unhappy story.”

Miss Betsy then assured her, she should take a friendly part in every thing that had happened to her, and that nothing could oblige her more than the confidence she mentioned: on which the other taking her by the hand, and letting fall some tears, said, “O miss Betsy! miss Betsy,—I have
“suffered much, and if you find a great
“deal to blame me for, you will find yet
“much more to pity.” Then after hav-
ing paused a little, as if to recollect, the passages she was about to relate, began in this manner;

‘You must remember,’ said she, ‘that
‘when you left us to go for London, I
‘was strictly watched and confined, on
‘account of my innocent correspondence
‘with Mr. Sparkish; but that young gen-
‘tleman

‘ tleman being sent to the university soon
 ‘ after, I had the same liberty as ever,
 ‘ and as much as any young lady in the
 ‘ school. The tutoress, who was with us
 ‘ in your time, being in an ill state of
 ‘ health, went away, and one mademoi-
 ‘ selle Grenouille, a French-woman, was
 ‘ put in her place: the governess had
 ‘ a high opinion of her; not only on the
 ‘ score of the character she had of her,
 ‘ but also for the gravity of her behaviour.
 ‘ But as demure, however, as she affected
 ‘ to be before her, she could be as merry
 ‘ and facetious as ourselves, when out of
 ‘ her sight, as you will soon perceive by
 ‘ what I have to tell you.

‘ Whenever any of us took an evening’s
 ‘ walk, this was the person to whose care
 ‘ we were entrusted, the governess grow-
 ‘ ing every day more infirm, and indeed
 ‘ unable to attend us.

‘ It was towards the close of a very hot
 ‘ day, that myself, and two more, went
 ‘ with mademoiselle Grenouille to take
 ‘ a little air in the lane, at the backside
 ‘ of the great road, that leads up to lord
 ‘ ***’s fine seat. We were about the
 ‘ middle of the lane when we heard the
 ‘ sound of French-horns; double-cornets,
 ‘ and other instruments of wind-music.

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‘ mademoiselle at this could not restrain
‘ the natural alertness of her country, but
‘ went dancing on, ’till we came very
‘ near those that played.

‘ You must know, my dear miss Betsy,’
continued she, ‘ that my lord ***’s park
‘ wall reaches to the bottom of this lane,
‘ and has a little gate into it: having, it
‘ seems, some company with him, he had
‘ ordered two tents to be erected in that
‘ part of the park; the one for himself
‘ and friends, the other for the music,
‘ who sounded the instruments to the
‘ healths were toasted: but this we being
‘ ignorant of, and delighted with the har-
‘ mony, wandered on till we came close
‘ to the little gate I mentioned, and there
‘ stood still listening to it. Some one or
‘ other of the gentlemen saw us, and said
‘ to the others, ‘ We have Eve’s-drop-
‘ pers;’ on which they quitted their seats,
‘ and ran to the gate: on seeing them all
‘ approach, we would have drawn back,
‘ but they were too quick for us; the gate
‘ was instantly thrown open, and six or
‘ seven gentlemen, of whom my lord him-
‘ self was one, rushed out upon us. Per-
‘ceiving we endeavoured to escape them,
‘ they caught hold of us, ‘ Nay ladies,’
‘ one of them, ‘ you must not think

“ to avoid paying the piper, after having
“ heard his music.”

‘ Mademoiselle, on this, addressed herself to my lord ***, with as much formality as she could assume, and told him, we were young ladies of distinction, who were placed at a boarding-school just by, and at present were under her care, so begged no rudeness might be offered. His lordship protested on his honour none should; but insisted on our coming into the park, and drinking one glass of whatever wine we pleased; upon which, ‘ What say you, ladies?’ cried mademoiselle, ‘ I believe we may depend on his lordship’s protection.’ None of us opposed the motion, as being as glad to accept it as herself. In fine, we went in, and were conducted to the tent, in the midst of which were placed bottles, glasses, jellies, sweetmeats, pickles, and I know not what other things to regale and quicken the appetite. Servants, who attended, cooled the glasses out of a silver fountain, on a little pedestal, at the one end of the tent, and filled every one a glass with what each of us chose. One of the company perceiving our conductress a French-woman, talked to her in her own language, and led her a n

round the table ; and, in the mean time,
the others took the opportunity of entertaining us : he that had hold of me, so plied me with kisses and embraces, that I scarce knew where I was.—Oh ! the difference between his careffes and the boyish insipid salutes of master Sparkish ! The others, I suppose, were served with the same agreeable robustness I was ; but I had not the power of observing them, any more than, as I afterwards found, they had of me.

In fine, never were poor innocent girls so pressed, — so kissed : — every thing but the dernier undoing deed, and that there was no opportunity of completing, every one of us, our tutoresses not excepted, I am certain experienced.

“Heavens!” cried miss Betsy, interrupting her, “how I envied your happiness a moment since, and how I tremble for you now.”

“O miss Betsy,” replied miss Forward, every thing would have been done in that forgetful hour ; but as I have already said, there was not an opportunity. My lover notwithstanding, for so I must call him, would not let me get out of his arms, till I had told him my name,

‘ and by what means he should convey a
‘ letter to me. I affected to make a
‘ scruple of granting this request, though
‘ heaven knows I was but too well pleased
‘ at his grasping me still faster, in order
‘ to compel me to it. I then gave him
‘ my name, and told him, that if he
‘ would needs write, I knew no other
‘ way by which he might be sure of my
‘ receiving his letter, but by slipping it
‘ into my hand as I was coming out of
‘ church, which he might easily do, there
‘ being always a great concourse of people
‘ about the door; on this he gave me a
‘ salute, the warmth of which I never
‘ shall forget, and then suffered me to de-
‘ part with my companions, who, if they
‘ were not quite so much engaged as my-
‘ self, had yet enough to make them re-
‘ member this night’s ramble.

‘ The tutoress knew well enough how to
‘ excuse our staying out so much longer
‘ than usual, and neither the governess,
‘ nor any one in the family, except our-
‘ selves, knew any thing of what had
‘ passed. I cannot say but my head ran
‘ extremely on this adventure. I heartily
‘ wished my pretty fellow might keep his
‘ word in writing to me, and was form-
‘ ing a thousand projects how to keep up
‘ a correspondence with him. I don’t tell

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‘ you I was what they call in love ; but
‘ certainly I was very near it, and longed
‘ much more for Sunday than ever I had
‘ done for a new gown : at last the wished
‘ for day arrived, — my gentleman was
‘ punctual, — he came close to me in the
‘ church-porch, — I held my hand in a
‘ careless manner, with my handkerchief
‘ in it, behind me, and presently found
‘ something put into it, which I hastily
‘ conveyed into my pocket, and on com-
‘ ing home, found a little three-corner’d
‘ billet, containing these lines :

To the charming miss FORWARD.

“ *Most lovely of your sex,*

“ I HAVE not slept since I saw you,
“ — so deep an impression has your
“ beauty made on my heart, that I find
“ I cannot live without you ; nor even
“ die in peace, if you vouchsafe not my
“ last breath to issue at your feet. In
“ pity then to the sufferings you occasion,
“ grant me a second interview, though it
“ be only to kill me with your frowns.
“ I am too much a stranger in these parts
“ to contrive the means ; be, therefore,
“ so divinely good to do it for me, else
“ expect to see me carried by your door
“ a bleeding, breathless corps, — the vic-

“ tim of your cruelty, instead of your
“ compassion, to

“ Your most grateful adorer,

“ And everlasting slave,

“ R. WILDLY.”

‘ In a postscript to this,’ pursued miss
Forward, ‘ he told me, that he would be
‘ in the church-porch in the afternoon,
‘ hoping to receive my answer by the
‘ same means I had directed him to con-
‘ vey to me the dictates of his heart.

‘ I read this letter over and over, as
‘ you may easily guess, by my remember-
‘ ing the contents of it so perfectly ; but
‘ it is impossible for me to express the
‘ perplexity I was in how to reply to it.
‘ I do not mean how to excuse myself from
‘ granting the interview he so passionately
‘ requested ; for that, perhaps, I wished
‘ for with as much impatience as he could
‘ do, but I was distracted at not being
‘ able to contrive any practicable method
‘ for our meeting.

‘ O miss Betsy, how did I long for you,
‘ or such a friend as you, to assist me in
‘ this dilemma ! but there was no one
‘ person in the whole house I dared to

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‘ with such a secret : — I could not eat a
‘ bit of dinner, nor scarce speak a word
‘ to any body ; so much were my thoughts
‘ taken up with what I should do. I was
‘ resolved to see him, and hear what he
‘ had to say, whatever should be the con-
‘ sequence : at last I hit upon a way, dan-
‘ gerous indeed in every respect, and
‘ shameful in a girl of my condition ;
‘ yet as there were no other, the frenzy I
‘ was possessed of, compelled me to have
‘ recourse to it.

‘ You must remember, my dear miss
‘ Betsy,’ continued she, with a deep sigh,
‘ the little door at the farther end of the
‘ garden, where by your kind contrivance
‘ young Sparkish was introduced : it was
‘ at this door I determined to meet Mr.
‘ Wildly. This you may be sure could
‘ not be done by day, without a disco-
‘ very, some one or other being continu-
‘ ally running into the garden. I there-
‘ fore fixed the rendezvous at night, at
‘ an hour when I was positive all the fa-
‘ mily would be in bed, and ordered it in
‘ this manner :

‘ Chance aided my ill genius in my
‘ undoing : I lay at that time alone ; —
‘ Miss Bab, who used to be my bedfellow,
‘ was gone home for a fortnight, on ac-

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‘ count of a great wedding in their family,
 ‘ and I thought I could easily slip down
 ‘ stairs when every body was asleep, and
 ‘ go through the kitchen, from which you
 ‘ know there is a passage into the garden.
 ‘ I took no care for any thing, but to pre-
 ‘ vent the disappointment of my design;
 ‘ for I apprehended nothing of ill from a
 ‘ man who adored me, and of whose will
 ‘ and actions I foolishly imagined I had
 ‘ the sole command.

‘ The settling this matter in my mind
 ‘ engrossed all my thoughts, till the bell
 ‘ began to ring for divine service, and I
 ‘ had only time to write these lines in an-
 ‘ swer to his billet:

To mr. WILDLY.

“ Sir,

“ I HAVE been always told it was
 “ highly criminal in a young maid,
 “ like me, to listen to the addresses of
 “ any man without receiving the per-
 “ mission of her parents for so doing;
 “ yet, I hope, I shall stand excused both
 “ to them and you, if I confess I am wil-
 “ ling to be the first to hear what so nearly
 “ concerns myself. I have but one way
 “ of speaking to you, and if your heart
 “ be as sincere and fervent as you profess,

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 155

“ you will not think it too much to wait
“ between the hours of eleven and twelve
“ this night, at a green door, in the wall
“ which encompasses our garden, at the
“ further end of the lane, leading to that
“ part of lord ***’s park, where we first
“ saw each other; you will find me, if
“ no cross accident intervenes, at the time
“ and place I mention; but impute this
“ condescension to no other motive than
“ that compassion you implore. I flatter
“ myself your intentions are honourable,
“ and in that belief am,

“ Sir,

“ Your humble servant,

“ A. FORWARD.”

Miss Betsy, during the repetition of this letter, and some time before, shook her head, and shewed great tokens of surprize and disapprobation, but offering no interruption, the other went on in her discourse in this manner:

‘ I protest to you, my dear miss Betsy,
‘ that I had nothing in view by
‘ this letter, and the assignation it con-
‘ veyed, than to secure him to me as a
‘ friend. I never had reason to repent of
‘ my private correspondence I carried on
‘ with

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‘ with mr. Sparkish, nor knew it was in
 ‘ the nature of man to take advantage of
 ‘ a maid’s simplicity ; but I will not pro-
 ‘ tract the narrative I promised by any
 ‘ needless particulars. Every thing hap-
 ‘ pened but too fortunately, alas ! accor-
 ‘ ding to my wish : I found mr. Wildly
 ‘ in the church-porch, gave him the fatal
 ‘ billet, unperceived by any one : night
 ‘ came on, — all the family were gone to
 ‘ their repose, — and I unseen, unheard,
 ‘ and unsuspected, quitted my chamber,
 ‘ and taking the route I told you of,
 ‘ opened the garden door, where it seems
 ‘ the person I expected had waited above
 ‘ half an hour.

‘ His first salutations were the most
 ‘ humble, and withal the most endearing,
 ‘ that could be. ‘ My angel,’ said he,
 ‘ how heavenly good you are ! permit
 ‘ me thus to thank you.’ With these
 ‘ words he threw himself on his knees,
 ‘ and taking one of my hands, kissed it
 ‘ with the extremest tenderness. But, oh !
 ‘ let no young woman depend on the first
 ‘ professions of her lover ; nor in her own
 ‘ power of keeping him at a proper dis-
 ‘ tance.

Here a sudden gush of tears prevented
 her, for some minutes, from proceeding.

her discourse, and miss Betsy found herself obliged to treat her with more tenderness, than in her own mind she thought the nature of her case deserved.



CHAP. XIV.

Concludes miss Forward's narrative, and relates some further particulars of miss Betsy's behaviour, on hearing a detail she so little expected.

HOW sweet are the consolations of a sincere friend ! — how greatly do they alleviate the severest of misfortunes ! — miss Forward soon dried up her tears, on a soft commiseration she saw they excited in miss Betsy ; and stifling, as well as she could, the rising sighs with which her bosom heaved, at the remembrance of what she was going to relate, resumed her mournful story in these terms :

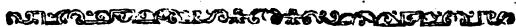
‘ You may very well suppose,’ said she, ‘ that the garden-door was not a proper place to entertain my lover in : — good-manners forbade me to use him in so coarse a manner : — besides, late as it was, some passenger might happen to find that way ; I therefore led him into
‘ the

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‘ the arbour, at the end of the terrafs,
 ‘ where we fat down together, on that
 ‘ broad bench under the arch, where you
 ‘ fo often used to loll, and call it your
 ‘ throne of ftate. Never was there a finer
 ‘ night : — the moon, and her attendant
 ‘ ftars, fhone with uncommon brightness,
 ‘ the air was all ferene, the boifterous winds
 ‘ were all locked in their caverns, and only
 ‘ gentle zephirs, with their fanning wings,
 ‘ wafted a thoufand odours from the neigh-
 ‘ bouring plants, perfuming all around. —
 ‘ ’Twas an enchanting fcene : nature her-
 ‘ felf feemed to confpire my ruin, and con-
 ‘ tributed all in her power to lull my
 ‘ mind into a foft forgetfulnefs of what
 ‘ I owed myfelf, — my fame, — my for-
 ‘ tune, — and my family.

‘ I was beginning to tell him, how fen-
 ‘ fible I was, that to admit him in this
 ‘ manner, was againft all the rules of de-
 ‘ cency and decorum, and that I hoped
 ‘ he would not abufe the good opinion I
 ‘ had of him, nor entertain the worfe of
 ‘ me for my fo readily complying with
 ‘ his request, and fuch like ftuff : to which
 ‘ he gave little ear, and only answered
 ‘ me with proteftations of the moft violent
 ‘ paffion that ever was ; — fwore that
 ‘ had more charms than my whole sex
 ‘ fides could boast of ; — that I was
 ‘ an

her discourse, and miss Betsy found herself obliged to treat her with more tenderness, than in her own mind she thought the nature of her case deserved.



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‘ You may very well suppose,’ said she, ‘ that the garden-door was not a proper place to entertain my lover in : — good-masters forbade me to use him in so free a manner : — besides, late as it was, some passenger might happen to that way ; I therefore led him into
‘ the

‘ ture to come to my assistance ; — the
‘ time, — the place, — all joined to aid
‘ his wishes ; — and, with the bitterest re-
‘ gret and shame I now confess it, my
‘ own fond heart too much consented.

‘ In a word, my dear miss Betsey, from
‘ one liberty he proceeded to another, till
‘ at last there was nothing left for him to
‘ ask, or me to grant.’

These last words were accompanied with a second flood of tears, which streamed in such abundance down her cheeks, that miss Betsey was extremely moved : her good-nature made her pity the distress, tho’ her virtue and understanding taught her to detest and despise the ill conduct which occasioned it : she wept, and sighed, in concert with her afflicted friend, and omitted nothing that she thought might contribute to assuage her sorrows.

Miss Forward was charmed with this generosity in miss Betsey, and composed herself as much as possible, to make those acknowledgments it merited from her ; and then proceeded to gratify her curiosity with that part of her adventures which yet remained untold.

‘ Whenever I recollect,’ resumed she,
‘ how strangely, — how suddenly, — how
‘ almost unfollicited, I yielded up my ho-
‘ nour, some lines, which I remember to
‘ have read somewhere, come into my
‘ mind, and seem, methinks, perfectly
‘ adapted to my circumstances. — They
‘ are these,

‘ Pleas’d with destruction, proud to
‘ be undone,
‘ With open arms I to my ruin run,
‘ And fought the mischiefs I was bid
‘ to shun :
‘ Tempted that shame a virgin ought
‘ to dread,
‘ And had not the excuse of being be-
‘ tray’d.

‘ Alas ! I see my folly now, — my
‘ madness, — but was blind to it too long.
‘ I upbraided not my undoer : — I re-
‘ monstrated not to him any of the ill
‘ consequences might possibly attend this
‘ transaction ; nor mentioned one word
‘ concerning how incumbent it was on
‘ him, to repair the injury he had done
‘ me by marriage : — sure never was there
‘ so infatuated a wretch ! Morning be-
‘ gan to break in upon us, and the pangs
‘ being obliged to part, and the means
‘ of

‘ of meeting again, now took up all my
 ‘ thoughts. Letting him in at midnight
 ‘ was very dangerous, as old nurse Win-
 ‘ ter, who you know is very vapourish,
 ‘ often fancies she hears noises in the house,
 ‘ and rises to see if all the doors and
 ‘ windows are fast: besides mr. Wildly
 ‘ told me, it was highly inconvenient for
 ‘ him, being obliged to make a friend of
 ‘ my lord ***’s porter, to sit up for
 ‘ him.

‘ I was almost at my wit’s end, ’till he
 ‘ recovered me by saying, he believed
 ‘ there might be a more easy way for our
 ‘ intercourse, than this nocturnal rendez-
 ‘ vous. ‘ Oh! what is that?’ cried I,
 ‘ earnestly. ‘ The French-woman,’ re-
 ‘ plied he, ‘ that lives here, is good-na-
 ‘ tured, and of a very amorous com-
 ‘ plexion; at least sir John Shuffle, who
 ‘ toyed with her in my lord’s park, tells
 ‘ me she is so; but,’ continued he, ‘ I
 ‘ dare take his word; he knows your sex
 ‘ perfectly, and, I dare answer, if you
 ‘ will get her to go abroad with you,
 ‘ the consequence will be agreeable to us
 ‘ all.’

“ What,’ said I, ‘ would you have me
 “ make her my confidante?’ ‘ Not alto-
 “ gether so,’ said he; ‘ at least not till

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“ you are upon even terms with her ; I
“ mean, till you have secret for secret.”

“ How can that be ?” demanded I.
“ leave that to me,” said he, “ do you on-
“ ly get her out to-morrow a walking ;
“ let me know what time you think you
“ can best do it, and sir John and I will
“ meet you as if by chance.” I told him,
“ I would undertake to do it if the wea-
“ ther were fair, and that they might
“ meet us going towards the town,
“ but it must be past five, after she had
“ given her French lesson to the ladies.
“ This being agreed upon, we parted,
“ though not without the extremest reluc-
“ tance ; at least, I am sure on my side it
“ was sincerely so. I then went back with
“ the same precaution I had gone out,
“ locked all the doors softly, and got into
“ my chamber before any of the family
“ were stirring.

“ I was more than ordinarily civil to
“ mademoiselle all the next day : I said
“ every thing I could think on to flatter
“ her, and having got an opportunity of
“ speaking to her alone, ‘ Dear mademoi-
“ selle,’ said I, in a wheedling tone, ‘ I
“ have a great favour to beg of you.’
“ ‘ What is that, miss ?’ replied she, ‘ any
“ thing in my power you may command.’
“ I

‘ I then told her, I had got a whim in
 ‘ my head for a new tippet, and that I
 ‘ wanted her fancy in the choice of the
 ‘ colours. ‘ With all my heart,’ said she,
 “ and when we go out a walking this
 “ evening, we can call at the milliner’s,
 “ and buy the ribbons.’ ‘ That will not
 “ do,’ cried I, ‘ I would not have any
 “ of the ladies know any thing of the
 “ matter, ’till I have made it and got it
 “ on; so no-body must go with us.’
 “ Well, well,’ answered she, ‘ it shall be
 “ so; but I must tell the governess. —
 “ I know she will not be against humour-
 “ ing you in such a little fancy, and
 “ will send the other tutoresses, or nurse
 “ Winter, to wait upon the other ladies.’
 ‘ I told her she was very good, but en-
 ‘ joined her to beg the governess to keep
 ‘ it a secret; for my tippet would be
 ‘ mighty pretty, and I wanted to surprise
 ‘ them with the sight of it.’

‘ The governess, however, was so kind
 ‘ as to let us go somewhat before the time
 ‘ we expected, in order to prevent any
 ‘ one from offering to accompany us;
 ‘ but early as it was, the two gentlemen
 ‘ were on the road. They accosted us
 ‘ with a great deal of complaisance:
 “ What! my Diana of the Forrest!” said
 ‘ sir John, to mademoiselle, ‘ am I so
 “ fortunate

“fortunate to see you once again?” What
“reply she made I do not know, being
“speaking to Wildly at the same time;
“but he also, by my instigations, made
“his chief court to mademoiselle, and both
“of them joined to intreat she would per-
“mit them to lead her to some house of
“entertainment: her refusals were very
“faint, and perceiving, by my looks, that
“I was not very averse, ‘What shall we
“do, miss?’ said she to me, ‘there is no
“getting rid of these men. Shall we ven-
“ture to go with them? — ’Tis but a fro-
“lic.’ ‘I am under your direction, ma-
“dame; but I see no harm in it, as
“to be sure,” replied I, ‘they are gentle,
“men of honour.’

“In fine, we went into the first house
“that had the prospect of affording us an
“agreeable reception. It is not to be doubt-
“ed but we were treated with the best the
“place we were in could supply: sir John
“declared the most flaming passion for ma-
“dame, and engrossed her so much
“himself, that Wildly had the liberty
“of addressing me, without letting her
“his choice gave me the preference.

John after using mademoiselle
some freedoms, which I could per-
ceive he did not greatly resent, told
“her,

‘ her, there was an exceeding fine picture
 ‘ in the next room, and asked her to go
 ‘ and look upon it. ‘ Oh ! yes,’ replied
 ‘ she, ‘ I am extravagantly fond of paint-
 ‘ ing. Are not you, miss ?’ continued she
 ‘ to me, with a careless air. ‘ No,’ said
 ‘ I, ‘ I had rather stay here, and look
 ‘ out of the window ; but I would not
 ‘ hinder this gentleman,’ meaning mr.
 ‘ Wildly : who replied, ‘ I have seen it
 ‘ already, so will stay and keep you com-
 ‘ pany.’

‘ I believe, indeed, we might have
 ‘ spared ourselves the trouble of these last
 ‘ speeches ; for our companions seemed as
 ‘ little to expect as to desire we should
 ‘ follow them, but ran laughing, jump-
 ‘ ing, and skipping out of the room,
 ‘ utterly regardless of those they left be-
 ‘ hind.

‘ Thus you see, ‘ my dear miss Betsey,
 ‘ continued she, Wildly had, a second
 ‘ time, the opportunity of triumphing
 ‘ over the weakness of your unhap-
 ‘ py friend. Oh ! had it been the last, p
 ‘ haps I had not been the wretch
 ‘ but, alas ! my folly ceased not
 ‘ loved, — and every interview mar-
 ‘ still dearer to me.

‘ On mademoiselle’s return, we began
‘ to talk of going home: ‘ Bless me,
‘ cried I, ‘ ’tis now too late to go into
“ town. What excuse shall we make to
“ the governess, for not having bought
“ the ribbonds?’ ‘ I have already con-
“ trived that,’ replied she, ‘ I will tell
“ her, that the woman had none but ugly
“ old fashioned things, and expects a fresh
“ parcel from London in two or three
“ days.’ ‘ O that is rare,’ cried I, ‘ that
“ will be a charming pretence for our
“ coming out again.’ ‘ And a charming
“ opportunity for our meeting you again,’
‘ said sir John Shuffle. ‘ If you have any
“ inclination to lay hold of it,’ rejoined
‘ mademoiselle. ‘ And you have courage
“ to venture,’ cried he. ‘ You see we
“ are no cowards,’ answered she briskly.
“ Well, then, name your day,’ said
‘ Wildly, ‘ if sir John accepts the chal-
“ lenge, I will be his second; but I am
“ afraid it cannot be ’till after Thursday,
“ because my lord talks of going to ***,
“ and we cannot be back in less than
“ three days.’

‘ Friday therefore was the day agreed
upon, and we all four were punctual to
the appointment. I shall not trouble
you with the particulars of our conver-
‘ sation

‘ fation in this or any other of the n
‘ ings we had together, only tell you,
‘ by the contrivance of one or othe
‘ us, we found means of coming toge
‘ once or twice every week, during
‘ whole time these gentlemen stayer
‘ the country, which was upwards of
‘ months.

‘ On taking leave, I pressed Wild
‘ write to me under cover to mademo
‘ Grenouille, which he promised to do
‘ I was silly enough to expect. M
‘ posts arriving without bringing
‘ letter, I was sadly disappointed,
‘ could not forbear expressing my cor
‘ to mademoiselle, who only laugh
‘ me, and told me, I as yet knew
‘ thing of the world, nor the temp
‘ mankind; — that a transient acqu
‘ tance, such as ours had been with
‘ gentlemen, ought to be forgot as
‘ as over; — that there was no great
‘ bability we should ever see one an
‘ again, and it would be only a fol
‘ keep up a correspondence by letter;
‘ and added, that by this time they
‘ doubtless, entered into other en
‘ ments; and so might we too, said
‘ if the place and fashion we live in
‘ not prevent us.

‘ I found by this, and some other
‘ speeches of the like nature, that it was
‘ the sex, not the person, she regarded.
‘ I could not, however, be of her way
‘ of thinking. I really loved Mr. Wildly,
‘ and would have given the world, had I
‘ been mistress of it, to have seen him
‘ again ; but, as she said, indeed, there
‘ was no probability for my doing so ; and
‘ therefore I attempted, through her per-
‘ suasions, to make a virtue of necessity,
‘ and forget both him and all had pass’d
‘ between us. I should in the end, per-
‘ haps, have accomplished this point ; but
‘ oh ! I had a remembrancer within,
‘ which I did not presently know of. In
‘ fine, I had but too much reason to be-
‘ lieve I was pregnant. — A thing, which
‘ though a natural consequence of the folly
‘ had been guilty of, never once entered
‘ to my head.

Mademoiselle Grenouille seemed now
terribly alarmed, on my communicating
her my suspicions on this score: she
sighed, 'twas very unlucky! — then
hesitated, and asked what I would do, if
I should really be as I feared? I re-
plied, that I knew not what course to
take, for if my father should know it
would be utterly undone: I added, that he
I 'was

‘ was a very austere man ; and, besides,
‘ I had a mother-in-law, who would not
‘ fail to say every thing she could to in-
‘ cense him against me.

‘ “ I see no recourse you have then,”
‘ said she, ‘ but by taking physic to cause
‘ an abortion. You must pretend you
‘ are a little disordered, and send for an
‘ apothecary. The sooner the better, for
‘ if it should become visible, all would
‘ infallibly be known, and we should both
‘ be ruined.’

‘ I was not so weak as not to see, that
‘ if any discovery were made, her share
‘ in the intrigue must come out, and she
‘ would be directly turned out of doors ;
‘ and that whatever concern she pretended
‘ for me, it was chiefly on her own ac-
‘ count ; however, as I saw no other re-
‘ medy, was resolved to take her advice.

‘ Thus by having been guilty of one
‘ crime I was ensnared to commit another,
‘ of a yet fouler kind : one was the error
‘ of nature, this an offence against nature.
‘ The black design, however, succeeded
‘ not ; I took potion after potion, yet still
‘ retained the token of my shame, which
‘ at length became too perspicuous, for

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‘ me to hope it would not be taken notice of by all who saw me.

‘ I was almost distracted, and madamoi-
‘ felle Grenouille little less so : I was one
‘ day alone in my chamber, pondering on
‘ my wretched state, and venting some
‘ part of the anguish of my mind in tears,
‘ when she came in : ‘ What avails all
‘ this whimpering, said she, ‘ you but
‘ hasten what you would wish to avoid.
‘ The governess already perceives you
‘ are strangely altered ; she thinks you
‘ are either in a bad state of health, or
‘ some way disordered in your mind, and
‘ talks of writing to your father to send
‘ for you home.’

“ O heavens !” cried I, — “ Home did
“ you say ? — No ; I will never go home.
“ The grave is not so hateful to me, nor
“ death so terrible as my father’s presence.”
“ I pity you from my soul,” said she,
“ but what can you do ? There will be
“ no staying for you here, after your con-
“ dition is once known, and it cannot be
“ concealed much longer.” These words,
the truth of which I was very well con-
vinced of, drove me into the last dis-
pair : I raved, — I tore my hair, —
I swore to poison, drown, or stab my-
self, rather than live to have my shame

‘ exposed to the severity of my father,
 ‘ and reproaches of my kindred.

“ Come, come,’ resumed she, ‘ there
 “ is no need of such desperate remedies,
 “ you had better go to London, and
 “ have recourse to Wildly ; who knows,
 “ as you are a gentleman’s daughter, and
 “ will have a fortune, but you may per-
 “ swade him to marry you ? if not, you
 “ can oblige him to take care of you
 “ in your lying-in, and to keep the child:
 “ and when you are once got rid of your
 “ burthen, some excuse or other may be
 “ found for your elopement.’

“ But how shall I get to London ?” re-
 ‘ sumed I, ‘ how find out my undoer in
 “ a place I know nothing of, nor ever
 “ have been at ? Of whom shall I en-
 “ quire ? I am ignorant of what family
 “ he is, or even where he lives.’ ‘ As to
 “ that,’ replied she, ‘ I will undertake to
 “ inform myself of every thing necessary
 “ for you to know, and if you resolve to
 “ go I will set about it directly.’ I then
 ‘ told her, I would do any thing, rather
 ‘ than be exposed ; on which she bid
 ‘ me assume as chearful a countenance as
 ‘ I could, and depend on her bringing
 ‘ me some intelligence of Wildly before I
 ‘ slept.

‘ The method she took to make good
‘ her promise, was, it seems, to send a
‘ person whom she could confide in to the
‘ seat of lord * * *, to enquire among the
‘ servants where mr. Wildly, who had
‘ lately been a guest there, might be found.
‘ She told me, that the answer they gave
‘ the man was, that they knew not where
‘ he lodged, but that he might be heard
‘ of at any of the coffee-houses about St.
‘ James’s. As I was altogether a stranger
‘ in London, this information gave me
‘ but little satisfaction; but mademoiselle
‘ Grenouille, whose interest it was to hurry
‘ me away, assured me that she knew that
‘ part of the town perfectly well, having
‘ lived there several months on her first
‘ arrival in England; — that there were
‘ several great coffee-houses there, frequented by all the gentlemen of fashion,
‘ and that nothing would be more easy
‘ than to find mr. Wildly at one or other
‘ of them. My heart, however, shuddered
‘ at the thoughts of this enterprize, yet
‘ her persuasions, joined to the terrors I
‘ was in of being exposed, and the certainty that a discovery of my condition
‘ was inevitable, made me resolve to undertake it.

‘ Nothing now remained but the means
 ‘ how I should get away, so as to avoid
 ‘ the pursuit might, doubtless, be made
 ‘ after me ; which after some consultation
 ‘ was thus contrived, and executed.

‘ A flying coach sets out from H——
 ‘ every Monday at two o’clock in the
 ‘ morning ; mademoiselle Grenouille en-
 ‘ gaged the same man, who had enquired
 ‘ at lord ***’s for mr. Wildly, to secure
 ‘ a place for me in it. The Sunday be-
 ‘ fore I was to go I pretended indisposi-
 ‘ tion to avoid going to church : I passed
 ‘ that time in packing up the best of my
 ‘ things in a large bundle ; for I had no
 ‘ opportunity of taking a box or trunk
 ‘ with me. My greatest difficulty was
 ‘ how to get out of bed from miss Bab,
 ‘ who still lay with me. I thought, how-
 ‘ ever, that if she happened to awake
 ‘ while I was rising, I would tell her I
 ‘ was not very well, and was only going
 ‘ into the next room, to open the window
 ‘ for a little air ; but I stood in no need
 ‘ of this precaution, she was in a sound
 ‘ sleep, and I left my bed, put on the
 ‘ cloaths I was to travel in, took up my
 ‘ bundle, and stole out of the room, with-
 ‘ out her perceiving any thing of the mat-
 ‘ ter. I went out by the same way

‘ wh

‘ which I had fulfilled my first fatal appointment with Mr. Wildly ; at a little distance from the garden-door, I found the friend of mademoiselle Grenouille, who waited for me with a horse and pillion ; he took my bundle before, and me behind him, and then we made the best of our way towards H——, where we arrived time enough for the coach. I alighted at the door of the inn, and he rode off directly to avoid being seen by any body, who might describe him, in case an enquiry should be made.

will not trouble you with the particulars of my journey, nor how I was amazed on entering this great metropolis ; I shall only tell you, that it being dark when we came in, I lay that night at the inn, and the next morning, following the directions mademoiselle Grenouille had given me, took a hackney coach, and ordered the man to drive to any of the streets about St. James’s, and stop at the first house where he could see a bill upon the door for ready furnished lodgings. It happened to be Rider-street ; the woman at first seemed a little scrupulous of taking me, as I was a stranger, and had no recommendation ; but, on my telling her I would

‘ pay her a fortnight beforehand, we agreed
‘ at the rate of twelve shillings a week.

‘ The first thing I did was to send a
‘ porter to the coffee-houses, where he
‘ easily heard of him, but brought me
‘ the vexatious intelligence that he was
‘ gone to Tunbridge, and it was not
‘ known when he would return. This
‘ was a very great misfortune to me, and
‘ the more so as I had very little money :
‘ I thought it best, however, to follow
‘ him thither, which I did the far-
‘ week.

‘ But, oh ! my dear miss Betsey, -
‘ unlucky every thing happened ? he -
‘ left that place the very morning before
‘ I arrived, and was gone for London.
‘ I had nothing now to do but return ;
‘ but was so disordered with the fatigues
‘ I had undergone, that I was obliged to
‘ stay four days to compose myself.
‘ When I came back I sent immediately
‘ to the coffee-house ; but how shall I ex-
‘ press the distraction I was in, when I
‘ was told he had lain but one night in
‘ town, and was gone to Bath.

‘ This second disappointment was ter-
‘ rible indeed : I had but half-a-crown
‘ remaining of the little stock I brought

‘ from

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‘ from the boarding-school, and had no
‘ way to procure a supply, but by selling
‘ my watch; which I did to a gold-smith
‘ in the neighbourhood, for what he
‘ was pleased to give me, and then set
‘ out for Bath by the first coach.

‘ Here I had the good fortune to meet
‘ him; he was strangely surpris’d at the
‘ sight of me in that place, but much
‘ more so when I told him, what had
‘ brought me there: he seem’d extremely
 concern’d at the accident. But when I
 mentioned marriage, he plainly told
 I must not think of such a thing:
 he was not in circumstances to sup-
 port a family; — that having lost the
 whole fortune, left him by his friends,
‘ at play, he was oblig’d to have recourse,
‘ for his present subsistence, to the very
 means by which he had been undone:
 short, that he was a gamester. The
 news startled me: treated, as I had al-
 ways heard it, with the utmost contempt,
 could not reconcile how such a one
 should be the guest and companion of
 nobility, though I have since heard, that
 persons of that profession frequently receive
 great favours from the nobility, which
 is not confin’d to persons of more unblemish-
 ed character.

' Wildly, however, it is certain, has
 ' some notions of honour and good-na-
 ' ture ; he assured me he would do all in
 ' his power to protect me; but added,
 ' that he had been very unfortunate of
 ' late, and that I must wait for a lucky
 ' chance, before he could afford me any
 ' supply.

' I stayed at Bath all the time he was
 ' there : he visited me every day, but I
 ' lived on my own money, 'till we came
 ' to town, when my time being very n
 ' he brought me to the place you
 ' me in, having, it seems, agreed t
 ' the woman of the house for a cer-
 ' tain sum of money to support me during
 ' my lying-in, and keep the child as long
 ' as it should live. The miseries I have
 ' sustained during my abode with this old
 ' hag, would be too tedious to repeat.
 ' The only joy I have is, that the wretched
 ' infant died in three days after its birth,
 ' so has escaped the woes, which children
 ' thus exposed are doomed to bear. Wildly
 ' has taken his last leave of me, and I
 ' have wrote to an aunt, entreating her to
 ' endeavour to obtain my father's forgive-
 ' ness. I pretended to her, that I left
 ' L-----e for no other reason
 ' because I had an ardent desire

' L-----e

London; and, as I think, no-body can reveal to him the true cause, have some hopes of not being utterly abandoned by him.'

Here this unfortunate creature finished her long narrative, and Miss Betsy saw her in too much affliction, to express any thing that might encrease it: she only thanked her for reposing a confidence in her, "Which," said she, "may be of great service to me some time or other."

Before they parted Miss Forward said, "I had gone in debt to Mrs. Nightshade, for some few things she wanted, over and above what is generally allowed in such cases, and had been affronted by her for not being able to discharge it, therefore I created Miss Betsy to lend her twenty shillings; on which the generous, and yet tempered young lady immediately drew her purse, and after giving her the sum she demanded, put two guineas more into her hand: "Be pleased to accept of this," said she, "you may possibly want something after having paid your debt." The other thanked her, and told her, she doubted not but her aunt would send her something, and she would then repay it. "I shall give myself no pain about that,"

said miss Betsy, and then took her leave, desiring she would let her know by a letter what success she had with her friends. Miss Forward told her, she might depend not only on hearing from her, but seeing her again, as soon as she had any thing to acquaint her with.



CHAP. XV.

Brings many things on the carpet, disagreeable to miss Betsy, in their beginning, and no less perplexing to their consequences.

THE account of those many and dreadful misfortunes, which the ill conduct of miss Forward had drawn upon her, made miss Betsy extremely pensive. ‘Tis ‘strange,’ said she to herself, ‘that a woman cannot indulge herself in the liberty ‘of conversing freely with a man, without being persuaded by him to do every ‘thing he would have her.’ She thought, however, that some excuse might be made for miss Forward, on the score of her being so strictly debarred from all acquaintance with the other sex. ‘People cried she, ‘have naturally an inclination ‘to do what they are most forbid.

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‘ poor girl had a curiosity to hear herself
‘ addressed, and having no opportunity
‘ of gratifying that passion, but by ad-
‘ mitting her lover at so odd a time and
‘ place, was indeed too much in his
‘ power to have withstood her ruin, even
‘ if she had been mistress of more courage
‘ and resolution than she was.’

On meditating on the follies which wo-
men are sometimes prevailed upon to be
guilty of, the discovery she had made of

Flora’s intrigue with Gayland came
into her mind. ‘ What,’ said she,
‘ would induce her to sacrifice her honour?’

‘ Declarations of love were not new to

... She heard every day the flatteries
with which our sex are treated by the
‘ men, and needed not to have purchased
‘ the assiduities of any one of them at so
‘ dear a rate. Good God! are innocence
‘ and the pride of conscious virtue, things
‘ of so little estimation, as to be thrown
‘ away for the trifling pleasure of hearing
‘ a few tender protestations? Perhaps all
‘ false, and uttered by one whose heart
‘ despises the easy fondness he has tri-
‘ umphed over, and ridicules the very
‘ grant of what he has so earnestly sol-
‘ licited!

It

It is certain, this young lady had the highest notions of honour and virtue, and whenever she gave herself time to reflect, looked on every thing that had a tendency to make an encroachment on them with the most extreme detestation; yet had she good-nature enough to pity those faults in others, she thought it impossible for her to be once guilty of herself.

But amidst sentiments as noble, and generous, as ever heart was possessed with vanity, that foible of her soul, crept in, and would have its share. She had been thoroughly attacked in a dishonourable way, but by Gayland, and the gentleman-commoner at Oxford; both which she rebuffed with a becoming disdain. At this she secretly exulted, and had that dependance on her power of repelling all the efforts, come they in what shape soever, that should be made against her virtue, that she thought it beneath her to behave so as not to be in danger of incurring them.

How great a pity it is, that a mind endued with so many excellent qualities, and which had such exalted ideas of what is truly valuable in woman kind, should be tainted with a frailty of so fatal a nature.

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ture, as to expose her to temptations, which if she were not utterly undone, it must be owing rather to the interposition of her guardian angel, than to the strength of human reason : but of that hereafter ; at present there were none had any base designs upon her ; we must shew what success those gentlemen met with, who addressed her with the most pure and honourable intentions : of this number we shall speak first of mr. Truworth and mr. Staple ; the one, as has been already said, frequently recommended by her brother, the other by mr. Goodman.

Staple had the good fortune (if it be called so) to be the first of these two who had the opportunity of declaring his passion : the journey of the other to London having been retarded two days longer than he intended.

This gentleman having mr. Goodman's leave, made a second visit at his house. Lady Mellafin and miss Flora knowing on what business he was come, made an excuse for leaving him and miss Betsy together. He made his addresses to her, in the forms which lovers usually observe on the first declaration ; and she replied to what he said, in a manner not to encourage

courage him too much, nor yet to take from him all hope.

While they were discoursing a footman came in, and told her, a gentleman from Oxford desired to speak with her, having some commands from her brother to deliver to her. Mr. Staple supposing they had business took his leave, and Mr. Trueworth, for it was he indeed, was introduced.

“Madam,” said he, saluting her with the utmost respect, “I have many obligations to Mr. Thoughtless; but which demands so large a portion of my gratitude, as the honour he conferred upon me in presenting you with this letter.” To which she replied, that her brother must certainly have a great confidence in his goodness, to give him this trouble; with these words she took the letter out of his hand, and having obliged him to seat himself; “You will pardon sir,” said she, “the rudeness, which my impatience to receive the commands of so near and dear a relation makes me guilty of.” He made no other answer to these words than a low bow, and she withdrew to a window, and found the contents of her brother’s letter were these:

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TO Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

My dear sister,

I SHALL leave Oxford to-morrow, in order to cross the country for the seat of Sir Ralph Trusty, as I suppose Mr. Goodman will inform you, I having wrote to him by the post; but the most valuable of my friends being going to London, and expressing a desire of renewing that acquaintance he had begun to commence with you here, I have taken the liberty of troubling him with the delivery of this to you. He is a man whose merits you are yet a stranger to, but I have so good an opinion of your penetration, as to be confident a very little time will convince you, that he is deserving all the esteem in your power to regard him with: in the mean time doubt not, but you will give him as a person whose success, every thing, is much desired by him, is,

With the tenderest good wishes,

Dear sister,

Your most affectionate brother,

F. THOUGHTLESS.

As

As she did not doubt but, by the stile and manner of this letter, that it had been seen by mr. Truworth, she could not keep herself from blushing, which he observing as he sat, flattered himself with taking as a good omen. He had too much awe upon him, however, to make any declaration of his passion at first visit, neither, indeed, had he the opportunity of doing it, lady Mellasin, and miss Flora, thinking they had left mr. Staple and miss Betty a sufficient time together, came into the room: the former was surpris'd to find he gone, and a strange gentleman in place; but miss Flora remembering perfectly well, they saluted each other with the freedom of persons who were not entire strangers, they entered into a conversation, and other company coming in, mr. Truworth had an opportunity of displaying the fine talents he was master of: his travels, — the observations he had made on the curiosities he had seen abroad, particularly at Rome, Florence, and Naples, were highly entertaining to the company; on taking leave he told the ladies, he hoped they would allow him the favour of making one at their tea-table sometimes, while he remained in London, to which lady Mellasin and her daughter little suspecting the motive he had for

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request, joined in assuring him, he could not come too often, and that they should expect to see him every day; but miss Betsy looking on herself as chiefly concerned in his admission, modestly added to what they had said, only that a person so much, and she doubted not but so justly, esteemed by her brother, might be certain of a sincere welcome from her.

Every body was full of the praises of this gentleman, and miss Betsy, though she said the least of any one, thought her father had not bestowed more on him, than he really deserved. Mr. Goodman coming home soon after, there appeared some marks of displeasure in his countenance, which, as he was the best humoured man in the world, very much surprised those of his family; but the company not being all retired, none of them seemed to take any notice of it, and went on with the conversation they were upon before his entrance.

The visitors, however, were no sooner gone, than without staying to be asked, he immediately let them into the occasion of his being so much ruffled: "miss Betsy," said he, "you have used me ill: I did not think you would have."

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“ have made a fool of me in the manner
 “ you have done.” “ Bless me, sir,”
 cried she, “ in what have I offended ?”
 “ You have not only offended against me,”
 answered he, very hastily, “ but also
 “ against your own reason, and common
 “ understanding: you are young, ’tis
 “ true, yet not so young as not to know
 “ it is both ungenerous and silly to im-
 “ pose upon your friends.” “ I scorn the
 “ thought, sir, of imposing upon any
 “ body,” said she; “ I therefore desire,
 “ sir, you will tell me what you mean
 “ by so unjust an accusation.” “ Unjust!”
 resumed he, “ I appeal to the whole world
 “ if it were well done of you to suffer
 “ me to encourage my friend’s courtship
 “ to you, when at the same time your
 “ brother had engaged you to receive the
 “ addresses of another.”

Miss Betsy, though far from thinking
 it a fault in her to hear the proposals of
 a hundred lovers, had as many offered
 themselves, was yet a little shocked at the
 reprimand given her by Mr. Goodman;
 and not being able presently to make any
 reply to what he had said, he took a let-
 ter he had just received from her brother
 out of his pocket, and threw it on the
 table, with these words: “ That will
 said he, “ whether I have not c-

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“resent your behaviour in this point.”
Perceiving she was about to take it up,
“Hold,” cried he, “my wife shall read
“it, and be the judge between us.”

Lady Mellasin, who had not spoke all
this time, then took the letter, and read
aloud the contents, which were these :

To mr. GOODMAN.

‘ *Sir,*

‘ **T**HIS comes to let you know I have
‘ received the remittances you were
‘ so obliging to send me. I think to set
‘ out to-morrow for L——e, but shall
‘ not stay there for any length of time :
‘ my intentions for going into the army
‘ are the same as when I last wrote to
‘ you, and the more I consider on that
‘ affair, the more I am confirmed that a
‘ military life is most suitable of any to
‘ my genius and humour : if, therefore,
‘ you can hear of any thing proper for
‘ e, either in the guards, or in a march-
‘ ing regiment, against I come to town,
‘ shall be infinitely thankful for the
‘ trouble you take in the enquiry ; but,
‘ this is not all the favour I have to
‘ of you at present. A gentleman of
‘ fortune, and character, has seen
‘ her, likes her, and is going to
‘ London

London, on no other business than to make his addresses to her. I have already wrote to her on this subject, and I believe she will pay some regard to what I have said in his behalf. I am very well assured she never can have a more advantageous offer, as to his circumstances, nor be united to a man of more true honour, morality, and sweetness of disposition; all which I have had frequent occasions of being an eye-witness of: but she is young, gay, and as yet, perhaps, not altogether so capable as I could wish of knowing what will make for her real happiness; I therefore intreat you, sir, as the long experienced friend of our family, to forward this match, both by your advice, and whatever else is in your power, which certainly will be the greatest act of goodness you can confer on her, as well as the highest obligation to a brother, who wishes nothing more than to see her secured from all temptations, and well settled in the world. I am,

‘ P. S. I had forgot to inform you, sir,
‘ that the name of the gentleman, I take
‘ the liberty of recommending with so
‘ much warmth, is Truworth; that he
‘ is descended from the ancient Britons
‘ by the father’s side, and by the mo-
‘ ther’s from the honourable and well
‘ known Oldcastle’s, in Kent.’

“ O, fye miss Betsy,” said lady Mella-
sin, ‘ how could you serve mr. Goodman
“ so? What will mr. Staple say, when he
“ comes to know he was encouraged to
“ court a woman that was already pre-en-
“ gaged.” “ Pre-engaged, madam,”
cried miss Betsy, in a scornful tone,
“ what to a man I never saw but three
“ times in my whole life, and whose
“ mouth never uttered a syllable of love
“ to me.” She was going on, but mr.
Goodman, who was still in a great heat,
interrupted her, saying, “ No matter
“ whether he has uttered any thing of the
“ business or not, it seems you are enough
“ acquainted with his sentiments, and I
“ doubt not but he knows you are, or he
“ would not have taken a journey to Lon-
“ don on your account. You ought there-
“ fore to have told me of his coming,
“ and what your brother had wrote con-
“ cerning him, and I should then have
“ let

“ let mr. Staple know it would be to no
 “ purpose to make any courtship to you,
 “ as I did to another just before I came
 “ home, who I find has taken a great
 “ fancy to you ; but I have given him
 “ his answer ; for my part I do not un-
 “ derstand this way of making gentle-
 “ men lose their time.”

’Tis probable these last words nettled miss Betsy more than all the rest he had said ; she imagined herself secure of the hearts of both Truworth and Staple, but was vexed to the heart to have lost the addresses of a third admirer, through the scrupulousness of mr. Goodman, who she looked upon to have nothing to do with her affairs in this particular : she was too cunning, however, to let him see what her thoughts were on that occasion, and only said that he might do as he pleased — that she did not want a husband ; that all men were alike to her : — added, that it seemed strange to her, a young woman who had her fortune make might not be allowed to hear the different proposals should be offered her on that score, and with these was flung out of the room, and was not to come into her chamber, nor would be upon to come down again, though miss Flora, and mr.

himself, repenting he had said so much, called to her for that purpose.

CHAP. XVI.

Presents the reader with the name and character of miss Betsy's third lover, and also with some other particulars.

THOUGH lady Mellasin had seemed to blame miss Betsy for not having communicated to mr. Goodman what her brother wrote to her in relation to mr. Truworth, yet in her heart she was far from being averse to her receiving a plurality of lovers, because whenever that young lady should fix her choice, there was a possibility some one or other of those she rejected might transmit his addresses to her daughter, whom she was extremely desirous of getting married, and had never yet been once solicited on honourable terms: — she therefore told her son, that he ought not to hinder miss from hearing what every gentleman offered, to the end she might accept — had the prospect of most advan-

Mr. Goodman in this, as in every thing else, suffered himself to be directed by her judgment, and the next morning, when miss Betsy came down, talked to her with his usual pleasantry. "Well," said he, "have you forgiven my ill humour last night? I was a little vexed to think my friend Staple had so poor a chance for gaining you, and the more so because Frank Thoughtless will take it ill of me, that I have done any thing in opposition to the person he recommends; but you must act as you please; for my part I shall not meddle any farther in these affairs.

"Sir," replied miss Betsy, very gravely "I shall always be thankful to my friends for their advice, and whenever I think seriously of a husband shall not fail to intreat yours in my choice; but," continued she, "one would imagine my brother, by writing so pressingly to me, wanted to hurry me into a marriage, whether I would or no; and though I have as much regard for him, as a sister can or ought to have, yet I have never been prevailed upon by him to enter into a state to which at present I have rather an aversion than incli-

“ That is,” said Mr. Goodman, “ you
“ have rather an aversion, than an incli-
“ nation, to the persons who address
“ you on that score.” “ No, sir,” an-
“ swered she, “ not at all ; the persons and
“ behaviour, both of Mr. Truworth and
“ Mr. Staple, appear to me to be unex-
“ ceptionable ; but sure one may allow a
“ man to have merit, and be pleased with
“ his conversation, without desiring to be
“ tacked to him for ever. I verily be-
“ lieve I shall never be in love ; but if I
“ am, it must be a long length of time,
“ and a series of persevering assiduities
“ must make me so.”

Mr. Goodman told her, these were only
romantic notions, which, he doubted not,
but a little time would cure her of.
At reply Miss Betsy would have made
uncertain, for the discourse was inter-
-d by a footman delivering a letter to
in which she found these lines :

Miss Betsy THOUGHTLESS.

Credence,

“ — courtier, — no beau, — and
“ — hence had but little commu-
“ with your sex ; but I am honest
“ — re, and you may depend on

‘ the truth of what I say. I have, heaven be praised, acquired a very large
‘ fortune, and for some time have had
‘ thoughts of marrying, to the end I
‘ might have a son to enjoy the fruit of
‘ my labours, after I am food either for
‘ the fishes, or the worms: — it is no
‘ great matter which of them. Now I
‘ have been wished to several fine women,
‘ but my fancy gives the preference to
‘ you; and if you can like me as well,
‘ we shall be very happy together. I
‘ spoke to your guardian yesterday, for I
‘ love to be above-board; but he seemed
‘ to lour, or, as we say at sea, to be a little
‘ hazy on the matter, so I thought I
‘ would trouble him no farther, but write
‘ directly to you. I hear there are two
‘ about you; but what of that? I have
‘ doubled the Cape of Good Hope many
‘ a time, and never failed of reaching my
‘ intended port, I therefore see no cause
‘ why I should apprehend a wreck by
‘ land. I am turned of eight and forty,
‘ ’tis true, which may-be you may thin
‘ too old; but I must tell you, dear pre
‘ one, that I have a constitution that
‘ wear out twenty of your washy pamp
‘ landmen of not half my age. *no*
‘ ever your fortune is I will settle
‘ dingly, and moreover will secure
‘ thing handsome to you at my

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‘ in case you should chance to be the
‘ longest liver. I know you young wo-
‘ men do not care a man should have any
‘ thing under your hand, so expect no an-
‘ swer; but desire you will consider on
‘ my proposals, and let me know your
‘ mind this evening at five o’clock, when
‘ I shall come to mr. Goodman’s, let him
‘ take it how he will. I can weather out
‘ any storm to come at you, and sincere-
‘ ly am,

‘ Dear Soul,

‘ Your most faithful,

‘ And affectionate lover,

‘ J. HYSOM.’

There were some passages in this letter that set miss Betsy into such immoderate fits of laughter, as made her a long time going through it. Having finished the sole, she turned to mr. Goodman, and putting it into his hands, “Be pleased, sir, to read that,” said she, “you shall see, at least, that I do not make a jest of all my lovers to you.” Mr. Goodman soon looked it over, and after giving it to her, “How troublesome a thing it is,” said he, “to be the guardian of a beautiful young lady! whether

" I grant, or whether I refuse the consent
" required of me, I equally gain ill-will
" from one side or the other."

Lady Mellasin, who had all this morning complained of a violent head-ach, and said nothing during this conversation, now cried out, " What new conquest is this
" miss Betsey has made?" " O, madam, replied miss Betsey, " your ladyship shall
" judge of the value of it; by the
" doughty epistle I have just received." With these words she gave the letter to miss Flora, desiring her to read it aloud, which she did, but was obliged, as miss Betsey herself had done, to stop several times, and hold her sides, before she got to the conclusion, and lady Mellasin, as little as she was then inclined to mirth, could not forbear smiling at hearing the manner in which this declaration of love was penned. " You are all very merry," said mr. Goodman, " but I can tell you, " captain Hysom is a match that many
" a fine lady in this town would jump at;
" he has been twenty-five years in the service of the East-India company, has
" made very successful voyages, and is
" immensely rich; he has lived at sea,
" indeed, the greatest part of his life, and
" much politeness cannot be expected from
" him; but he is a very honest good

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“ tured man, and I believe means well.
“ I wish he had offered himself to Flora.”
“ Perhaps, sir, I should not have refused
“ him,” replied she, briskly; “ I should
“ like a husband prodigiously that would
“ be abroad for three whole years toge-
“ ther, and leave me to bowl about in
“ my coach and six, while he ploughed
“ the ocean in search of new treasures to
“ throw into my lap at his return.”

“ Well, well,” said miss Betsy, laugh-
ing still more, “ who knows but when I
“ have teized him a little, he may fly for
“ shelter to your more clement goodness.”
“ Aye! aye,” cried mr. Goodman, “ you
“ are a couple of mad-caps, indeed, and
“ I suppose between you both the captain
“ will be finely managed; but no matter,
“ I shall not pity him, as I partly told
“ him what he might expect.”

After this mr. Goodman went out, and
he young ladies went up to dress against
inner, diverting themselves all the time
h the poor captain's letter. Miss Betsy
I miss Flora, that as he was for coming
directly to the point, she must use all
artifice, in order to keep him in sus-
; “ for,” said she, “ if I should let
know any part of my real senti-
concerning him, he would be
K 4 “ gone

“ gone at once, and we should lose all
“ our sport : I will, therefore,” continued
she, “ make him believe, that I dare not
“ openly encourage his pretensions, be-
“ cause my brother had recommended one
“ gentleman to me, and mr. Goodman
“ another ; but shall assure him, at the
“ same time, that I am inclined to neither
“ of them, and shall contrive to get rid
“ of them both, as soon as possible : this,”
said she, “ will keep him in hopes, with-
“ out my downright promising any thing
“ in his particular favour.”

Miss Flora told her, she was a perfect
Machiavel in love affairs, and was about
to say something more, when a confused
sound of several voices, among which she
distinguished that of lady Mellasin very
loud, made her run down stairs to
see what was the occasion ; but miss Betty
stayed in the chamber, being busily em-
ployed in something belonging to her
dress, or had she been less engaged, it is
not probable she would have troubled her-
self about the matter, as she supposed it
only a quarrel between lady Mellasin, and
some of the servants, as in effect it was
and she, without asking, was immedi-
ately informed.

Nanny, the upper house-maid, and the same who had delivered Mr. Saving's letter to Miss Betsy, and carried her answer to him, coming up with a broom in her hand, in order to sweep her lady's dressing-room, ran into the chamber of Miss Betsy, and seeing that she was alone, "O Miss!" said she, "there is the devil to do below." "I heard a sad noise, indeed," said she carelessly. "Why you must know, Miss," cried the maid, "that my lady had given John the butler warning, and for his time being up, Mrs. Prinks had orders to pay him off this morning, but would have stopped thirty shillings for a silver orange strainer that is missing. John would not allow it, and being in a passion, told Mrs. Prinks, that he would not leave the house without his full wages; that for any thing he knew the strainer might be gone after the diamond necklace. This I suppose she repeated to my lady, and that put her in so ill a humour this morning, that if my master had not come down as he did, we should all have had something at our heads.

"However," continued the wench, "she ordered Mrs. Prinks to give him his whole money; but, would you believe Miss? My master was no sooner

“ gone out, than she came down into the
 “ kitchen raving, and finding John there
 “ still, (the poor fellow, God knows, only
 “ stayed to take his leave of us,) she tore
 “ about, and swore we should all go; ac-
 “ cused one of one thing, and another of
 “ another.” “ Well, but what did the fel-
 “ low mean about the diamond necklace?”
 cried miss Betsey, interrupting her. “ I
 “ will tell you the whole story,” said she,
 “ but you must promise never to speak a
 “ word of it to any body; for though I
 “ do not value the place, nor will stay
 “ much longer; yet they would not give
 “ one a character, you know, miss.”

Miss Betsey then having assured her, she
 would never mention it, the other shut the
 door, and went on in a very low voice,
 in this manner.

‘ Don’t you remember, miss,’ said she,
 ‘ what a flurry my lady and mrs. Prinks
 ‘ were in one day? how her ladyship
 ‘ pulled off all her fine cloaths, and they
 ‘ both went out in a hackney coach;
 ‘ then mrs. Prinks came home, and went
 ‘ out again?’ ‘ Yes,’ replied miss Betsey,
 ‘ I took notice they were both in a good
 ‘ deal of confusion.’ ‘ Aye, miss, well
 ‘ they might,’ said Nanny; ‘ that very af-
 ‘ ternoon John was gone to see a Com-

‘ that keeps a pawn-broker’s shop in
‘ Thieving-lane, and as he was sitting in
‘ a little room behind the counter, that
‘ it seems shuts in with glass doors, who
‘ should he see through the window, but
‘ mrs. Prinks come in; she brought my
‘ lady’s diamond necklace, and pledged
‘ it for a hundred and twenty, or a hun-
‘ dred and thirty guineas, I am not sure
‘ which he told me, for I have the sad-
‘ dest memory; but it is no matter for
‘ that. John was strangely confounded,
‘ as you may think, but resolved to see
‘ into the bottom, and when mrs. Prinks
‘ was got into the coach, popped up be-
‘ hind it, and got down when it stopped,
‘ which was at the sign of the hand and
‘ tipstaff in Knaves-acre; so that this mo-
‘ ney was raised to get somebody that
‘ was arrested out of the bailiff’s hands,
‘ for John said, it was what they call a
‘ spunging-house that mrs. Prinks went
‘ into. Lord! how deceitful some people
‘ are, my poor master little thinks how
‘ his money goes; but I’ll warrant our
‘ house-keeping must suffer for this.’

‘ This gossiping young hussy would have
run on much longer, doubtless, with her
comment on this affair; but hearing
miss Flora’s foot upon the stairs, she left
off, and opening the door, softly slipped in-
to

to her lady's dressing-room, and fell to work in cleaning it.

Miss Flora came up, exclaiming on the ill behaviour of most servants, telling miss Betsey what a passion her mamma had been in. The other made little answer to what she said on that or any other score, having her thoughts very much taken up with the account just given her by Nanny; she recollected that lady Mellasin had never dressed since that day, always making some excuse to avoid paying any grand visits, which she now doubted not but it was because she had not her necklace. It very much amazed her, as she well knew her ladyship was never without a good deal of ready cash, therefore was certain the sum must be large indeed, for which her friend was arrested, that it reduced her to the necessity of applying to a pawn-broker, and who the friend could be for whom she would demean herself, puzzled her extremely. It was not long, however, before she let into the secret, but in the mean time other matters of more moment were treated on.



CHAP. XVII.

*Is of less importance than the former,
yet must not be omitted.*

LADY Mellasin having vented her spleen on those, who by their stations were obliged to bear it, and the object of it removed out of the house, became extremely chearful the remaining part of the day. The fashion in which it might be supposed miss Betsy would be accosted by her tarpaulin enamorado, and the reception she would give his passion, occasioned a great deal of merriment, and even mr. Goodman, seeing his dear wife took part in it, would sometimes throw in his joke.

“ Well, well,” cried miss Betsy, to heighten the diversion, “ what will you say now, if I should take a fancy to the captain, so far as to prefer him to any of those who think it worth their while to solicit me on the score of love ?”

“ This is quite ungenerous in you,” cried miss Flora, “ did you not promise to turn the captain over to me, when you had done with him.” — “ That
“ may

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“ may not happen a great while,” replied the other; “ for I assure you I have seen him three or four times, when he has called here on business to mr. Goodman, and think to part with a lover of his formidable aspect would be to deprive myself of the most conspicuous of my whole train of admirers; — but suppose,” continued she, in the same gay strain, “ I resign to you mr. Staple or mr. Truworth, would not that do as well?”

“ Do not put me in the head of either of them, I beseech you,” said miss Flora, “ for fear I should think too seriously on the matter, and it should not be in your power to oblige me.”

“ All that must be left to chance,” cried miss Betsey; “ but so far I dare promise you, as to do enough to make them heartily weary of their courtship to me, and at liberty to make their addresses elsewhere.”

After this they fell into some conversation concerning the merits of the two last mentioned gentlemen: — they allowed mr. Staple to have the finest face, and that mr. Truworth was the best shaped, and had the most graceful air in every thing.

thing he did : — mr. Staple had an infinity of gaiety, both in his look and behaviour : — mr. Trueworth had no less of sweetness, and if his deportment seemed somewhat too serious for a man of his years, it was well atoned for by the excellence of his understanding. — Miss Flora however said, upon the whole, that both of them were charming men, and lady Mellasin added, that it was a great pity either of them should have bestowed his heart where there was so little likelihood of ever receiving any recompence. — “ Why so, my dear,” cried mr. Goodman, “ if my pretty charge is at present “ in a humour to make as many fools as “ she can in this world, I hope she is not “ determined to lead apes in another ; — “ I warrant she will change her mind one “ time or other. — I only wish she may “ not, as the old saying is, out-stand her “ market.”

While they were thus discoursing, a servant brought a letter from mr. Staple, directed to miss Betsy Thoughtless, which was immediately delivered to her : — on being told from whence it came, gave it to mr. Goodman, saying, “ I shall make no “ secret of the contents, — therefore, dear “ guardian, read it for the benefit of the “ company.”

Mr.

Mr. Goodman shook his head at the little sensibility she testified of his friend's devoirs, but said nothing, being willing to gratify the curiosity he doubted not but they all were in, miss Betsy herself not excepted, as careless as she affected to be, which he did by reading in an audible voice these lines :

To the most amiable and most accomplished of her sex.

• *Madam,*

• **I** F the face be the index of the mind,
 • (as I think one of our best poets takes
 • upon him to assert) your soul must cer-
 • tainly be all made up of harmony, and
 • consequently take delight in what has
 • so great a similitude of its own heavenly
 • nature. — I flatter myself, therefore, you
 • will not be offended that I presume to
 • intreat you will grace with your pre-
 • sence, a piece of music, composed by
 • the so justly celebrated signor Bonancini,
 • and I hope will have justice done it in
 • the performance, — they being the best
 • hands in town that are employed.

• I do myself the honour to inclose
 • tickets for the ladies of mr. Goodman's
 • family, and beg leave to wait on y

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‘ this afternoon, in the pleasing expectation,
‘ not only of being permitted to attend you to the concert, but also of an
‘ opportunity of renewing those humble
‘ and sincere professions I yesterday began to make,
‘ of a passion, which only charms such as yours could have the
‘ power of inspiring in any heart, and can
‘ be felt by none with greater warmth,
‘ zeal, tenderness, and respect, than by
‘ that of him who is, and ever must be,

‘ Madam,

‘ Your most passionate,

‘ And most faithful admirer,

‘ T. STAPLE.

‘ P. S. If there are any other ladies of
‘ your acquaintance, to whom you think
‘ the entertainment may be agreeable,
‘ be pleased to make the invitation, —
‘ I shall bring tickets with me to accommodate
‘ whoever you choose to accompany you. — Once more I beseech
‘ you, madam, to believe me as
‘ above,

‘ Yours, &c.’

‘ Mr.

Mr. Goodman had scarce finished reading this letter, when lady Mellasin and her daughter both cried out, at the same time, “O miss Betsy, — how unlucky this happens : — what will you do with the captain now ?”

“We will take him with us to the concert,” replied she ; — “and in my opinion nothing could have fallen out more fortunately. — The captain has appointed to visit me at five, — mr. Staple will, doubtless, be here about that time, if not before, in order to usher us to the entertainment, so that my father cannot expect any answer from me to his letter, and consequently I shall gain time.”

Though mr. Goodman was far from approving this way of proceeding, yet he could not forbear smiling with the rest, at miss Betsy’s contrivance, and told her, it was a pity she was not a man, she would have made a rare minister of state.

“Well, since it is so,” said lady Mellasin, “I will have the honour of complimenting the captain with the ticket mr. Staple intended for me.” Both miss Flora and miss Betsy pressed her
ladyship

ladyship to be of their company, and Mr. Goodman likewise endeavoured to persuade her to go; but she excused herself, saying, "A concert was never among the number of those entertainments she took pleasure in:" on which they left off speaking any farther on it; — but Miss Betsy was not at a loss in her own mind to guess the true reason of her ladyship's refusal, and looked on it as a confirmation of the truth of what Nanny had told her, concerning the diamond necklace.

There seemed, notwithstanding, one difficulty still remaining for Miss Betsy to get over; which was the probability of Mr. Truworth's making her a visit that afternoon; — she did not choose to leave him to go to the concert, nor yet to ask him to accompany them to it, because she thought it would be easy for a man of his penetration to discover that Mr. Staple was his rival; which she was by no means willing he should do before he had made a declaration to her of his own passion.

She was beginning to consider how she should manage in a point, which she looked upon as pretty delicate, when a letter from that gentleman eased her of all the apprehensions she at present had,
on

on his score. — The manner in which he expressed himself was as follows :

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS,

• *Madam,*

• I Remember (as what can be forgot in
• which you have the least concern)
• that the first time I had the honour of
• seeing you at Oxford, you seemed to
• take a great deal of pleasure in the pretty
• tricks of a squirrel, which a lady in the
• company had on her arm : — one of
• those animals (which they tell me has
• been lately caught) happening to fall
• in my way, I take the liberty of pre-
• senting him to you, intreating you will
• permit him to give you such diversion
• as is in his power. — Were the little
• denizen of the woods endued with any
• share of human reason, how happy wou
• he think himself in the loss of his libe
• and how hug those chains which en
• him to so glorious a servitude.

• I had waited on you in person, in
• hope of obtaining pardon for appre
• ing you with so trifling an offering ;
• am deprived of that satisfaction
• pressing commands of an old au
• on my passing this eveni
• ner : — but what need is there

‘ logize for the absence of a person so
‘ little known to you, and whose senti-
‘ ments are yet less so? I rather ought to
‘ fear that the frequency of those visits I
‘ shall hereafter make, may be looked
‘ upon as taking too presuming an ad-
‘ vantage of the permission you have been
‘ so good to give me. I will not, how-
‘ ever, anticipate so great a misfortune, but
‘ endeavour to prevent it by proving, by
‘ all the ways I am able, that I am,

‘ With the most profound submission,

‘ Madam,

‘ Your very humble, obedient,

‘ And eternally devoted servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.’

Miss Betsy, after having read this letter, ordered the person who brought it should come into the parlour; on which he delivered to her the present mentioned in the letter, which she received with a great deal of sweetness, gave the fellow something to drink her health, and sent her service to his master, with thanks, and an assurance that she should be glad to see him, whenever it suited with his pleasure.

All

All the ladies then began to examine the squirrel, which was, doubtless, the most beautiful creature of its kind, that could be purchased: the chain, which fastened it to its habitation, was gold, the links very thick, and curiously wrought. — Every one admired the elegance of the donor's taste.

Miss Betsey herself was charmed to an excess, both with the letter and the present; but as much as she was pleased with the respectful passion of Mr. Trueworth, she could not find in her heart to think of parting with the assiduities of Mr. Staple, nor even the blunt addresses of Captain Hyfom, at least 'till she had exercised all the power her beauty gave her over them.

As the two last mentioned gentlemen were the friends of Mr. Goodman, he went out somewhat before the hour in which either of them was expected to come, choosing not to seem to know what it was not in his power to amend, and determined, as he had promised Miss Betsey, not to interfere between her and any of those who pretended to court her.

These

These two lovers came to the door at the same time, and Mr. Staple saying to the footman that opened the door, that he was come to wait on Miss Betsy. — “I want to speak with that young gentlewoman too,” cried the captain, “if she be at leisure: — tell her my name is Hyfom.”

Mr. Staple was immediately shewed up into the dining-room, and the captain in the parlour, till Miss Betsy should be told his name: “That spark,” said he to himself, “I find is known here, I suppose he is one of those Mr. Goodman told me of, that has a mind to Miss Betsy; but as she knew I was to be here, I think she might have left some orders concerning me, and not made me wait till that young gew-gaw had spoke his mind to her.”

The fellow not coming down immediately, he grew very angry, and began to call and knock with his cane against the floor, which, it may be easily imagined, gave some sport to those above. — Miss Betsy, however, having told Mr. Staple the character of the man, and the diversion she intended to make of his pretensions, would not vex him too much, and
to

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to atone for having made him attend so long, went to the top of the stairs herself, and desired him to walk up.

The reception she gave him was full of all the sweetness she could assume, and excused having made him wait, and laid the blame on the servant, who, she pretended, could not presently recollect his name: — this put him into an exceeding good humour, “Nay, fair lady,” said he, “as to that I have stayed much longer
“sometimes, before I could get to the
“speech of some people, who I have not
“half the respect for as I have for you;
“— but you know,” continued he, giving her a kiss, the smack of which might be heard three rooms off, “that I have
“business with you, — business that requires dispatch, and that made me a
“little impatient.”

All the company had much ado to refrain laughing out-right, but miss Betsy kept her countenance to a miracle, “We
“will talk of business another time,” said she, “we are going to hear a fine entertainment of musick; — you must not
“refuse giving us your company, — lady
“Mellasin has got a ticket on purpose
“for you. — “I am very much obliged
“to her ladyship,” replied the captain.

“ but I do not know whether mr. Good-
“ man may think well of it or not ; for
“ he would fain have put me off from
“ visiting his charge here. — I soon
“ found by his way of speaking the wind
“ did not set fair for me from that quar-
“ ter, so tacked about, — shifted my
“ sails, and stood for the port directly.”

“ Manfully resolved, indeed !” said mr.
Staple ; “ but I hope, captain, you have
“ kept a good look-out, in order to avoid
“ any ship of greater burthen, that might
“ else chance to overset you.”—Oh, sir ! as
“ to that,” replied the captain, “ you
“ might have spared yourself the trouble
“ of giving me this caution, there are
“ only two small pinks in my way, and
“ they had best stand clear, or I shall run
“ foul on them.”

Though mr. Staple had been apprized
before-hand of the captain's pretences, and
that miss Betsy intended to encourage
them only by way of amusement to her-
self and friends, yet the rough manner in
which his rival had uttered these words,
sent the blood into his cheeks, which
Malasin perceiving, and fearing
“ was began in jest might in the
“ be more serious than could be
“ ended the conversation, and ad-
L dressing

• dressing herself to the captain, on the score of what he had said concerning *mr.* Goodman, made many apologies for her husband's behaviour in this point : — assured him, that he had not a more sincere friend in the world, nor one who would be more ready to serve him, in whatever was in his power.

The captain had a fund of great good-nature in his heart, but was somewhat too much addicted to passion, and frequently apt to resent without a cause, but when once convinced he had been in the wrong, no one could be more ready to acknowledge and ask pardon for his mistake : — he had been bred at sea ; — his conversation, for almost his whole life, had been chiefly among those of his own occupation ; — he was altogether unacquainted with the manners and behaviour of the polite world, and equally a stranger to what is called genteel raillery, as he was to courtly complaisance ; it is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that he was often rude, without designing to be so, and took many things as affronts, which were not meant as such.

Lady Mellasin, who never wanted words, and knew how to express herself in the most persuasive terms, whenever she
pleased

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 219

pleased to make use of them, had the address to convince the captain, that mr. Goodman was no enemy to his suit; though he would not appear to encourage it.

While the captain was engaged with her ladyship in this discourse, miss Betsy took the opportunity of telling mr. Staple that she insisted upon it, that he should be very civil to a rival from whose pretensions he might be certain he had nothing to apprehend, and moreover that when she gave him her hand to lead her into the concert-room, he should give his to miss Flora, without discovering the least marks of discontent: — the lover looked on this last injunction as too severe a trial of his patience; but she would needs have it so, and he was under a necessity of obeying, or of suffering much greater mortification from her displeasure.

Soon after this they all four went to the entertainment in mr. Goodman's coach, which lady Mellasin had ordered to be got ready. — The captain was mightily pleased with the music, and had judgment enough in it to know it was better than the band he had on board his ship: — “When they have done playing,” said he, “I will ask them what they will have to

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“ go with me the next voyage ;” but mr. Staple told him, it would be an affront, that they were men who got more by their instruments than the best officer either by sea or land did by his commission. — This mistake, as well as many others the captain fell into, made not only the company he was with, but those who sat near enough to hear him, a good deal of diversion.

Nothing of moment happening either here, or at mr. Goodman’s, where they all supped together, it would be needless to repeat any particulars of their conversation; what has been said already of their different sentiments and behaviour, may be a sufficient sample of the whole,



CH

CHAP. XVIII.

Treats on no fresh matters, but serves to heighten those already mentioned.

MR. Goodman had stayed abroad 'till very late that night the concert had been performed, so was not a witness of any thing that had passed after the company came home; but on lady Mellasin's repeating to him every thing she remembered, was very well pleased to hear that she had reconciled the captain to him, though extremely sorry, that the blunt ill-judged affection of that gentleman had exposed him to the ridicule, not only of miss Betsy, but also of all her followers.

That young lady, in the mean time, was far from having any commiseration for the anxieties of those who loved her; — on the contrary, she triumphed in the pains she gave, if it can be supposed that she, who was altogether ignorant of them in herself, could look upon them as sincere in others: — but I am apt to believe ladies of this cast, regard all the professions of love made to them (as indeed many of them are) only as words of course,

— the prerogative of youth and beauty in the one sex, and a duty incumbent on the other to pay ; — they value themselves on the number and quality of their lovers, as they do upon the number and richness of their clothes, because it makes them of consideration in the world, and never take the trouble of reflecting how dear it may sometimes cost those to whom they are indebted for indulging this vanity.

That this, at least, was the motive which induced miss Betsy to treat her lovers in the manner she did, is evident to a demonstration, from every other action of her life : — she had a certain softness in her disposition, which rendered her incapable of knowing the distress of any one, without affording all the relief was in her power to give, and had she sooner been convinced of the reality of the woes of love, she sooner had left off the ambition of inflicting them, and perhaps have been brought to regard those who laboured under them, rather with too much than too little compassion ; — but of this the reader will be able to judge on proceeding farther in this history.

There were now three gentlemen who all of them addressed this young lady on the most honourable terms, yet did her giddy

giddy mind make no distinction between the serious passion they had for her, and the idle gallantries she received from those who either had no design in making them, or such as tended to her undoing.

Impatient to hear in what fashion mr. Truworth would declare himself, and imagining he would come the next day, as he had made* so handsome an apology for not having waited on her the preceding one, she told mr. Staple and captain Hyson, in order to prevent their coming, that she was engaged to pass that whole afternoon, and evening, with some ladies of her acquaintance: neither the captain nor mr. Staple suspected the truth of what she said, but the former was in too much haste to know some issue of his fate to be quite contented with this delay.

Miss Betsy was not deceived in her expectations; — soon after dinner was over, she was told mr. Truworth had sent to know if she was at home, and beg leave to wait upon her. — Lady Mellasin having a great deal of company that day in the dining-room, she went into an adjacent one to receive him; — he was charmed at finding her alone, a happiness he could not flatter himself with, on entering the house, as he was assured by the number

of footmen that he saw in the hall, that many visitants were there before him : — this unexpected piece of good fortune, as he then thought it, especially as he found her playing with the squirrel he had sent to her the day before, so much elated him, that it brightened his whole aspect, and gave a double share of vivacity to his eyes; “ May I hope your pardon, madam,” said he, “ for presuming to approach you “ with so trifling a present, as that little “ creature ?” — “ Oh, mr. Trueworth !” answered she, “ I will not forgive you if “ you speak slightly of my squirrel, “ though I am indebted to you for the “ pleasure he gives me. — I love him excessively ! — you could not have made “ me a more obliging present.”

“ How, madam !” cried he, “ I should “ be miserable, indeed, if I had nothing “ in my power to offer more worthy “ your acceptance than that animal. — “ What think you, madam, of an adoring “ and passionately devoted heart ?

“ A heart !” rejoined she, “ oh dear, a “ heart may be a pretty thing for ought I “ know to the contrary ; but there is such “ an enclosure of flesh and bone about it “ that it is utterly impossible for one

“ see into it, and consequently to know
“ whether one likes it or not.”

“ The heart, madam, in the sense I
“ mean,” said he, “ implies the soul,
“ which being a spirit and invisible, can
“ only be known by its effects : — if the
“ whole services of mine may render it
“ an oblation, such as may obtain a gra-
“ cious reception from the adorable miss
“ Thoughtless, I shall bless the hour in
“ which I first beheld her charms, as the
“ most fortunate one I ever had to boast
“ of.” In ending these words he kissed
her hand, with a look full of the greatest
respect and tenderness.

She then told him, the services of the
soul must needs be valuable, because they
were sincere ; but as she knew not of what
nature those services were he intended to
render her, he must excuse her for not
readily accepting them : — on which,
is not to be doubted, but that he as-
sured her, they should be only such as
were dictated by the most pure affection,
& accompanied by the strictest honour.

was going on with such protesta-
as may be imagined a man so much
interested would make to the object of
his desires, when he was interrupted by

miss Flora, who came hastily into the room, and told him, that her mamma hearing that he was in the house, expected he would not leave it without letting her have the pleasure of seeing him ; — that they were just going to tea, and that her ladyship intreated he would join company with those friends she had already with her.

Mr. Truworth would have been glad to have found some plausible pretence for not complying with this invitation, but as he could not make any, that would not be looked on as favouring of ill manners, and miss Betsey insisting on his going, they all went together into the dining-room.

The lover had now no farther opportunity of prosecuting his suit in this visit ; but he made another the next day, more early than before, and found no-body but mr. Goodman with miss Betsey, lady Mel-lasin and miss Flora being gone among the shops, either to buy something they wanted, or to tumble over goods, as they frequently did, meerly for the sake of seeing new fashions. — Mr. Truworth having never been seen by mr. Goodman, miss Betsey presented him to him with these words, “ Sir, this is a gentleman
“ from Oxford, — an intimate friend
“ brother

“ brother Frank’s, and who did me the
“ favour to bring me a letter from him.”
There needed no more to make mr. Goodman know, both who he was and the business on which he came : — he received him with a great deal of good manners ; but knowing his absence would be most agreeable, after some few compliments, pretended he was called abroad by urgent business, and took his leave.

How much it rejoiced the sincerely devoted heart of mr. Truworth, to find himself once more alone with the idol of his wishes, may easily be conceived by those who have had any experience of the passion he so deeply felt ; — but his felicity was of a short continuance, and he profited but little by the complaisance of mr. Goodman.

He was but just beginning to pour forth some part of those tender sentiments ; with which his soul overflowed, when he was prevented from proceeding, by a second interruption, much more disagreeable than the former had been.

Mr. Staple, and captain Hyfom, for whom miss Betsy had not left the same orders she had done the day before, came both to visit her : the former had the ad-

vantage in being there somewhat sooner than the other, and accosted her with an air, which made the enamoured heart of mr. Truworth immediately beat an alarm to jealousy. Mr. Staple, who had seen him there once before, when he brought her brother's letter to her, did not presently know him for his rival, nor imagined he had any other intent in his visits, than to pay his compliments to the sister of his friend.

They were all three engaged in a conversation, which had nothing particular in it, when miss Betsy was told captain Hyfom desired to speak with her; on which she bid the fellow desire him to walk in. "He is in the back parlour, madam," replied he; — I told him you had company, so he desires you will come to him there; for he says he has great business with you, and must needs speak with you." Both miss Betsy and mr. Staple laughed immoderately at this message; but mr. Truworth, who was not in the secret, looked a little grave, as not knowing what to think of it. "You would scarce believe, sir," said mr. Staple to him, "that this embassy came from the court of cupid, yet I assure you the captain is one of this lady's most passionate admirers." — "Yes, indeed,"

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“ deed,” added miss Betsy, “ and threatens terrible things to every one, who should dare to dispute the conquest of my heart with him ; — but go,” continued she, to the footman, “ tell him, I have friends with me whom I cannot be so rude to leave, and that I insist on his giving us his company in this room.”

The captain on this was prevailed upon to come in, though not very well pleased at finding himself obliged to do so, by the positive commands of his mistress. — He paid his respects, however, in his blunt manner to the gentlemen, as well as miss Betsy, and having drawn his chair as near her as he could, “ I hoped, madam,” said he, “ you would have found an opportunity of speaking to me before now : — you must needs think I am a little uneasy till I know what I have to depend upon.” — “ Bless me, sir,” cried she, “ you talk in an odd manner !” — and then, continued she, pointing to mr. Trueworth, “ this gentleman here, who is a friend of my brother’s, will think I have out-run my income, and that you come to dun me for money borrowed of you.” — “ No, no,” answered he, “ as to that you owe me nothing but good-will, — and that I think I deserve
“ for

“ for the respect I have for you, if it
 “ were for nothing else ; — but, madam,
 “ I should be glad to know some answer
 “ to the business I wrote to you upon.”
 “ — Lord, sir !” replied she, “ I have
 “ not yet had time to think upon it, —
 “ much less to resolve on any thing.” —
 “ That is strange,” resumed he, “ why
 “ you have had three days, and sure that
 “ is long enough to think and resolve too,
 “ on any thing. — “ Not for me indeed,
 “ captain, answered she, laughing ; — but
 “ come, here are just four of us, — what
 “ think you, gentlemen, of a game of
 “ quadrille to kill time ?”

Mr. Truworth and mr. Staple told her
 at once, that they approved the motion,
 and she was just going to call for the
 cards and fishes, when the captain stopped
 her, saying, “ I never loved play in my
 “ life, and have no time to kill as may-
 “ hap these gentlemen have, who, ’tis
 “ likely have nothing else to do than to
 “ dress and visit ; — I have a great deal
 “ of business upon my hands, — the ship
 “ is taking in her lading, and I do not
 “ know but we may sail in six or seven
 “ weeks, so must desire you would fix a
 “ day for us to be alone together, that
 “ I may know at once what it is you de-
 “ sign to do.” — “ Fye, captain !” re-

plies

plied she, "how can you think of such a thing? — I assure you, sir," added she, with an affected disdain, "I never make appointments with gentlemen."

"That I believe," said he, "but you should consider that I live a great way off; — 'tis a long walk from Mile-end to St. James's, and I hate your jolting hackney-coaches; — besides I may come and come again, and never be able to get a word with you in private, in an afternoon, and all the morning I am engaged either at the India-House, or at 'Change; — therefore I should think it is better for both of us not to stand shilly, shally; but come to the point at once; for lookye, fair lady, if we happen to agree, there will be little enough time to settle every thing, as I am obliged to go so soon." — "Too little in my opinion, sir," answered she, "therefore I think it is best to defer talking any more of the matter, 'till you come back."

"Come back," cried he, "why do you consider I shall be gone three years." — "Really, sir," said she, "as I told you before I have never considered any thing about it, nor can promise I should be able to say any more to you
" at

“ at the end of twice the time you mention, than I can do at present, which I assure you is just nothing at all.”

Though both mr. Truworth, and mr. Staple, had too much good manners to do any thing that might affront the captain, yet neither of them could restrain their laughter so well as to prevent some marks of the inclination they had for it, from being visible in their faces; — and willing to contribute something on their parts to the diversion they perceived she gave herself, with a lover so every way unsuitable to her, — one told her, it was a great pity she did not consult the captain’s convenience; — the other said, that it must needs be a vast fatigue for a gentleman, who was accustomed only to walk the quarter deck, to take a stretch of four miles at once; — “ And all to no purpose,” cried he, that had spoken first, “ pray, madam, give him his dispatch.”

As little acquainted as the captain was with raillery, he had understanding enough to make him see, that miss Betsey’s behaviour to him had rendered him the jest of all the company that visited her, and this he took so ill, that all the liking he before had to her was now turned into contempt: — Finding they were going on in the iron

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nical way they had began,—“Lookye, gentlemen,” said he, with a pretty stern countenance, “I would advise you to meddle only with such things as concern yourselves;—you have nothing to do with me, nor I with you.—If your errand here be as I suspect it is, there sits one who I dare answer will find you employment enough, as long as you shall think it worth your while to dance attendance. As for you, Madam,” continued he, turning to miss Betsy, “I think it would have become you as well, to have given me a more civil answer,—if you did not approve of my proposals, you might have told me so at first;—but I shall trouble neither you nor myself any farther about the matter.—I see how it is well enough, and when next I steer for the coast of matrimony, shall take care to look out for a port not cumbered with rubbish;—so your servant.”

As he was going out of the house, he met lady Mellasin and miss Flora just entering, being returned from the ramble above-mentioned:—they saw he was very angry, and would fain have persuaded him to turn back, telling him, that if any misunderstanding had happened between him and miss Betsy, they would endeavour

deavour to make it up, and reconcile them. — To which he replied, that he thanked them for their love, but he had done with miss Betsy for good and all; — that she was no better than a young flirt, and did not know how to use a gentleman handsomely; — said, he should be glad to take a bowl of punch with mr. Goodman before he went on his voyage; but would not come any more to his house to be scoffed at by miss Betsy, and those that came after her.

Miss Flora told him, that it was unjust in him to deprive her mamma, and herself, of the pleasure of his good company for the fault of miss Betsy, who, she said, she could not help owning was of a very giddy temper. — Lady Mellafin, to what her daughter had said, added many obliging things, in order to prevail on him, either to return, or renew his visits hereafter; but the captain was obstinate, and persisting in his resolution of coming there no more, took his leave, and miss Flora lost all hope of receiving any benefit from his being rejected by miss Betsy.



CHAP. XIX.

Will make the reader little the wiser.

THE greatest part of the time, that mr. Truworth and mr. Staple stayed with miss Betsy, was taken up with talking of captain Hyson ; — his passion, — his behaviour, and the manner in which he received his dismissal, afforded indeed an ample field for conversation : — lady Mellasin, and miss Flora, relating the answers he had given them, on their pressing him to come back, mr. Truworth said, that it must be owned, that he had shewn a strength of resolution, which few men in love could boast of.

“ Love, sir, according to my notions
“ of that passion,” replied mr. Staple,
“ is not to be felt by every heart ; —
“ many deceive themselves in this point,
“ and take for it what is in reality no
“ more than a bare liking of a beautiful
“ object : — the captain seems to me to
“ have a soul, as well as form, cast
“ in too rough a mould, to be capable
“ of those refined and delicate ideas,
“ which

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“ which alone constitute and are worthy
“ to be called love.”

“ Yet,” said lady Mellasin, “ I have
“ heard mr. Goodman give him an ex-
“ cellent character, and above all that he
“ is one of the best-natured men breath-
“ ing.” — “ That may be indeed, ma-
“ dam,” resumed mr. Staple, “ and some
“ allowances ought to be made for the
“ manner in which he has been bred;
“ though,” added he, “ I have known
“ many commanders, not only of India-
“ men, but of other trading vessels, who
“ have all their life time used the seas,
“ yet have known how to behave with
“ politeness enough when on shore.”

Mr. Truworth agreed with mr. Staple,
that though the amorous declaration of a
person of the captain’s age, and fashion of
bringing up, to one of miss Betsy’s, exposed
him to the deserved ridicule of as many as
knew it; yet ought not his particular
foible to be any reflection on his occupa-
tion, which merited to be held in the
greatest veneration, as the strength and
opulence of the nation was owing to its
commerce in foreign parts.

This was highly obliging to mr. Staple,
whose father had been a merchant, and

Mr. Truworth being the first who took his leave, perceiving the other stayed supper, he said abundance of handsome things in his praise, and seemed to have conceived so high an esteem of him, that Miss Betsy was diverted in her mind to think how he would change his way of speaking, when once the secret of his rivalry should come out, as she knew it could not fail to do in a short time.

But as easy as Mr. Staple was at present, on this occasion, Mr. Truworth was no less anxious and perplexed: — he was convinced that the other visited Miss Betsy on no other score than that of love, and it appeared to him equally certain, by the freedom with which he saw him treated in the family, that he was likewise greatly encouraged, if not by Miss Betsy herself, at least by her guardian.

His thoughts were now wholly taken up with the means, by which he might gain the advantage over a rival, whom he looked upon as a formidable one, not only for his personal accomplishments, but also for his having the good fortune to address her before himself. — All he could do was to prevent, as much as possible, all opportunities of his entertaining Miss Betsy in private, till the arrival of Mr. Francis Thoughtless,

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Thoughtless, from whose friendship, and the influence he had over his sister, he hoped much.

He waited on her the next day very early: — Mr. Goodman happening to dine that day later than ordinary, on account of some friends he had with him, and the cloth not being drawn, Miss Betsy went and received him in another room. — Having this favourable opportunity, he immediately began to prepare for putting into execution one of those stratagems he had contrived for separating her from Mr. Staple. After some few tender speeches, he fell into a discourse concerning the weather; said, he was sorry to perceive the days so much shortened, — that summer would soon be gone; and added, that as that beautiful season could last but a small time, the most should be made of it. — “I came,” said he, “to intreat the favour of you, and Miss Flora, to permit me to accompany you in an airing through Brumpton, Kensington, Chelsea, and the other little villages on this side of London.”

Miss Betsy replied, that she would go with all her heart, and believed she could answer the same for Miss Flora, there being only two grave Dons, and their wives, within

within, whom she would be glad to be disengaged from; — “but if not,” said she, “I can send for a young lady in the neighbourhood, who will be glad to give us her company.”

She sent first, however, to miss Flora, who immediately came in, and the proposal being made, accepted it with pleasure, and added, that she would ask her mamma for orders for the coach to be got ready. — “It needs not, madam,” said mr. Truworth, “my servant is here, and he shall get one from Blunt’s;” — but miss Flora insisted on their going in mr. Goodman’s, saying, she was certain neither he nor her mamma would go out that day, as the company they had were come to stay; on which mr. Truworth complied.

When she had left the room, “Ah! madam,” said he to miss Betsy, “could I flatter myself with believing I owed this condescension to any other motive than your complaisance, to a person who has some share in your brother’s friendship, I should be blest indeed; — but, ah! I see I have a rival, — a rival dangerous to my hopes, not only on the account of his merits, but also as he had the honour of declaring his passion

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“ sion before me : — the fortunate mr.
 “ Staple,” added he, kissing her hand,
 “ may perhaps have already made some
 “ impresson on that heart I would sacri-
 “ fice my all to gain, and I am come too
 “ late.”

“ Rather too soon,” replied she, smiling;
 — “ both of you equally too soon,
 “ admitting his sentiments for me be as
 “ you imagine ; for I assure you, sir,
 “ my heart has hitherto been entirely my
 “ own, and is not very likely to incline
 “ to the reception of any guest of the na-
 “ ture you mean, for yet a long — long
 “ time. — Whoever thinks to gain me
 “ must not be in a hurry, like captain
 “ Hyfom.”

Mr. Truworth was about to make
 some passionate reply, when miss Flora re-
 turned, and told them the coach would
 be ready immediately, for she herself had
 spoke to the coachman, and bid him put
 the horses to with all the haste he could ;
 on which the lover expressed his sense of
 the obligation he had to her for taking
 this trouble, in the politest terms.

A person of much less discernment than
 this gentleman might easily perceive, that
 the way to be agreeable to miss Betsy was

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not to be too serious; — he therefore assumed all the vivacity he was master of, both before they went, and during the whole course of the little tour they made, in which it is not to be doubted but he regaled them with every thing the places they passed through could furnish.

The ladies were so well pleased both with their entertainment, and the company of the person who entertained them, that they seemed not in haste to go home, and he had the double satisfaction of enjoying the presence of his mistress, and of giving at least one day's disappointment to his rival: — he was confirmed in the truth of this conjecture, when, on returning to Mr. Goodman's, which was not till some hours after close of day, the footman who opened the door told Miss Betsy, that Mr. Staple had been to wait upon her.

After this it may be supposed he had a night of much more tranquility, than the preceding one had afforded him: — the next morning, as early as he thought decency permitted, he made a visit to Miss Betsy, under the pretence of coming to enquire if her health had not suffered by being abroad in the night air, and how she had rested: — she received him with

a great deal of sprightliness, and replied, she found herself so well after it, as to be ready for such another jaunt, whenever he had a fancy for it. “ I take you at your word, madam,” cried he, transported to hear she anticipated what he came on purpose to intreat, — “ I am ready this moment if you please,” continued he, “ and we will either take a barge, and go up the river, or a coach to Hampstead, or any of those places, just to diversify the scene; — you have only to say which you chuse.”

She then told him, there was a necessity of deferring their ramble till the afternoon, because miss Flora was abroad, and would not return till dinner-time. — “ As to what route we shall take, and every thing belonging to it,” said she, “ I leave it entirely to you; — I know nobody has a more elegant taste, or a better judgment.” — “ I have taken care,” replied he, “ to give the world an high opinion of me in both, by making my addresses to the amiable miss Betsey; — but, madam,” pursued he, “ since we are alone, will you give me leave to tell you how I have employed my hours this morning.” — “ Why, — in dressing, — breakfasting, — and, perhaps, a little reading,” answered she. — “ A

“ small

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“ small time, madam, suffices for the two
“ former articles with me,” resumed he,
“ but I have indeed been reading ; —
“ happening to dip into the works of a
“ poet, who wrote near a century ago,
“ I found some words so adapted to the
“ situation of my heart, and so agreeable
“ to the sense of the answer I was about
“ to make yesterday to what you said,
“ concerning the perseverance of a lover,
“ that I could not forbear putting some
“ notes to them, which I beg you will
“ give me your opinion of.

In speaking these words, he took a piece
of paper out of his pocket, and sung the
following stanzas.

I.

“ THE Patriarch, to gain a wife
“ Chaste, beautiful, and young,
Serv’d fourteen years, a painful life,
“ And never thought it long.

II.

Oh ! were you to reward such cares,
“ And life so long would stay,
Not fourteen, but four hundred years,
‘ Would seem but as one day.

Mr. Truworth had a fine voice, and great skill in music, having perfected himself in that science from the best masters, when he was in Italy. Miss Betsy was so charmed both with the words and the notes, that she made him sing them several times over, and afterwards set them down in her music-book, to the end that she might get them by heart, and join her voice in concert with her spinet.

Mr. Truworth would not make his morning visit too long, believing it might be her time to dress against dinner, as she was now in such a deshabille as ladies usually put on, on their first rising; — so after having received a second promise from her of giving him her company that day abroad, took his leave, highly satisfied with the progress he imagined he had made in her good graces.

The wind happening to grow a little boisterous, though the weather otherwise was fair and clear, made Mr. Truworth think a land journey would be more agreeable to the ladies, than to venture themselves upon the water; he therefore procured a handsome livery coach, and attended by his two servants, went to Mr. Goodman's: — the ladies were already in

expectation of him, and did not make him wait a moment.

Nothing extraordinary happening at this entertainment, nor at those others, which, for several succeeding days without intermission Mr. Truworth prevailed on his mistress to accept, it would be superfluous to trouble the reader with the particulars of them.

Mr. Staple all this time was very uneasy ; — he had not seen ~~miss~~ Betsy for a whole week, and though he knew not as yet, that he was deprived of that satisfaction, by her being engrossed by a rival, yet he now began to be sensible she had less regard for him, than he had flattered himself he had inspired her with ; and this of itself was a sufficient mortification to a young gentleman, who was not only passionately in love, but also could not, without being guilty of great injustice to his own merits, but think himself not altogether unworthy of succeeding. — This however was no more than a slight sample of the inquietudes which the blind god sometimes inflicts on hearts devoted to him, as will hereafter appear in the progress of this history.



CHAP. XX.

Contains an odd accident, which happened to miss Betsy in the cloisters of Westminster-abbey.

MR. Truworth, who was yet far from being acquainted with the temper of the object he adored, now thought he had no reason to despair of being one day in possession of all he aimed to obtain; — it seemed certain to him, at least, that he had nothing to apprehend from the pretensions of a rival, who at first he had looked upon as so formidable, and no other at present interposed between him and his designs.

Miss Betsy, in the mean time, wholly regardless of who hoped or who despaired, had no aim in any thing she did, but merely to divert herself, and to that end laid hold of every opportunity that offered. Mr. Goodman having casually mentioned, as they were at supper, that one Mr. Soulguard had just taken orders, and was to preach his first sermon at Westminster-abbey the next day, she presently had a curiosity of hearing how he would behave.

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behave in the pulpit ; — his over modest, and, as they termed it, sheepish behaviour in company, having, as often as he came there, afforded matter of ridicule to her and miss Flora. — These two young ladies therefore talking on it after they were in bed, agreed to go to the cathedral, not doubting but they should have enough to laugh at, and report to all those of their acquaintance who had ever seen him.

What meer trifles, — what airy nothings serve to amuse a mind not taken up with more essential matters ? — Miss Betsy was so full of the diversion she should have in hearing the down-looked bashful mr. Soulguard harangue his congregation, that she could think and talk of nothing else, till the hour arrived when she should go to experience what she had so pleasant an idea of.

Miss Flora, who had till now seemed as eager as herself, cried all at once, that her head ached, and that she did not care for stirring out : — miss Betsy, who would fain have laughed her out of it, told her, she had only got the vapours, — that the parson would cure her, — and such like things, — but the other was not to be prevailed upon by all miss Betsy, or even lady Mellasin herself, could say, and an-

swered, with some fullness, that positively she would not go. — Miss Betsey was highly ruffled at this sudden turn of her temper, as it was now too late to send for any other young lady of her acquaintance to go with her; — resolving, nevertheless, not to baulk her humour, she ordered a chair to be called, and went alone.

Neither the young parson's manner of preaching, nor the text he chose, being any way material to this history, I shall therefore pass over the time of divine service, and only say, that after it was ended miss Betsey passing towards the west-gate, and stopping to look on the fine tomb, erected to the memory of mr. secretary Craggs, was accosted by mr. Bloomacre, a young gentleman who sometimes visited lady Mellasin, and lived at Westminster, in which place he had a large estate.

He had with him, when he came up to her, two gentlemen of his acquaintance, but who were entire strangers to miss Betsey: — “What,” said he, “the celebrated miss Betsey Thoughtless! — miss Betsey Thoughtless! the idol of mankind! alone, unattended by any of her train of admirers, and contemplating these memento's of mortality!” — “To compliment my understanding,” replied she,

she, gaily, "you should rather have told me I was contemplating the memento's of great actions." — "You are at the wrong end of the cathedral for that, madam," resumed he, "and I don't remember to have heard any thing extraordinary of the life of this great man, whose effigy makes so fine a figure here, except the favours he received from the ladies."

"'Twere too much then to bestow them on him both alive and dead," cried she, "therefore we'll pass on to some other."

Mr. Bloomacre had a great deal of wit and vivacity, nor were his two companions deficient in either of these qualities; so that between the three *miss* Betsy was very agreeably entertained: — they went round from tomb and tomb, and the real characters, as well as epitaphs, some of which are flattering enough, afforded a variety of observations. — In fine, the conversation was so pleasing to *miss* Betsy, that she never thought of going home, 'till it grew too dark to examine either the sculpture, or the inscriptions; so insensibly does time glide on, when accompanied with satisfaction.

But now ensued a mortification, which struck a damp on the sprightliness of this young lady : — she had sent away the chair which brought her, not doubting but that there would be others about the church doors. She knew not how difficult it was to procure such a vehicle in Westminster, especially on a Sunday ; — to add to her vexation, it rained very much, and she was not in a habit fit to travel on foot in any weather, much less in such as this.

They went down into the cloisters, in order to find some person whom they might send, either for a coach or chair, for the gentlemen would have been glad of such conveniencies for themselves, as well as miss Betsy : — they walked round and round several times, without hearing or seeing any body ; — but at last a fellow, who used to be employed in sweeping the church doors, offered his service to procure them what they wanted, in case there was a possibility of doing it ; — they promised to gratify him well for his pains, and he ran with all the speed he could to do as he had said.

The rain and wind increased to such a prodigious height, that scarce was ever a
more

more tempestuous evening. — Almost a whole hour was elapsed, and the man not come back, so that they had reason to fear neither coach nor chair was to be got. — Miss Betsy began to grow extremely impatient; — the gentlemen endeavoured all they could to keep her in good humour, — “We have a good stone roof “over our heads, madam,” said one of them, “and that at present shelters us “from the inclemency of the elements;” “— besides,” cried another, “the storm “cannot last always, — and when it is “a little abated, — here are three of us, “— we will take you in our arms by “turns, and carry you home.” — All this would not make miss Betsy laugh, and she was in the utmost agitation of mind to think what she should do, when, on a sudden, a door in that part of the cloister which leads to Little Dean’s Yard was opened, and a very young lady, not exceeding eleven years of age, but very richly habited, came running out, and taking miss Betsy by the sleeve, “Madam,” said she, “I beg to speak with “you.” — Miss Betsy was surprised, but stepping some paces from the gentlemen to hear what she had to say, the other drawing towards the door, cried, “Please, “madam, to come in here;” on which she followed, and the gentlemen stood about

some four or five yards distant. — Miss Betsey had no sooner reached the threshold, which had a step down into the hall, than the young lady took hold of her hand, and pulling her gently down, as if to communicate what she had to say with the more privacy, a footman, who stood behind the door, immediately clapped it to, and put the chain across, as if he apprehended some violence might be offered to it. — Miss Betsey was in so much consternation, that she was unable to speak one word, 'till the young lady, who still had hold of her hand, said to her, “ You may thank heaven, madam, that our family happened to be in town, — else I do not know what mischief might have befallen you.” — “ Bless me,” cried miss Betsey, and was going on, but the other interrupted her, saying, hastily, as she led her forward, “ Walk this way, — my brother will tell you all.” — Miss Betsey then stopped short, “ What means all this ? said she : where am I pray, miss ? who is your brother ?” To which the other replied, that her brother was the lord viscount ———, and that he at present was the owner of that house.

The surprize miss Betsey had been put in by this young lady's first accosting her, was

was not at all dissipated by these words, but had now an equal portion of curiosity added to it; — she longed to know the meaning of words, which at present seemed so mysterious to her, and with what kind of mischief she had been threatened, that she readily accompanied her young conductress into a magnificent parlour, at the upper end of which sat the nobleman she had been told of, — “ I am extremely “ happy,” said he, as soon as he saw her enter, “ that providence has put it in “ my power to rescue so fine a lady from “ the villainy contrived against her.”

Miss Betsy replied, that she should always be thankful for any favours conferred upon her, but desired to know of what nature they were, for which she was indebted to his lordship: — he then told her, that the persons she had been with had the most base designs upon her; — that he had heard, from a closet window where he was sitting, two of them lay the plot for carrying her off in a hackney coach; and added, that being struck with horror at the foul intention, he had contrived, by the means of his sister, to get her out of their power; — “ For,” said he, “ I know “ one of them to be so bloody a villain, “ that had I gone out myself, I must have “ fallen a sacrifice to their resentment.”

Miss

Miss Betsey was quite confounded; she knew not how to question the veracity of a nobleman, who could have no view or interest to deceive her, yet it was equally incongruous to her, that Mr. Bloomacre could harbour any designs upon her of that sort his lordship mentioned: — she had several times been in company with that gentleman, and he had never behaved towards her in a manner which could give her room to suspect he had any dishonourable intentions towards her; — but then, the treatment she had received from the gentleman-commoner at Oxford reminded her, that men of an amorous complexion want only an opportunity to shew those inclinations which indolence, or perhaps indelicacy, prevents them from attempting to gratify by assiduities, and courtship.

After having taken some little time to consider what she should say, she replied, that she was infinitely obliged to his lordship for the care he took of her, but might be very well amazed to hear those gentlemen had such ill designs upon her, two of whom were perfect strangers to her, and the other often visited at the house where she was boarded. As for the sending for a coach, she said it was
by

by her own desire, if no chair could be procured; and added, that if his lordship had no other reason to apprehend any ill was meant to her, she could not, without injustice, forbear to clear up the mistake.

Lord ——— was a little confounded at these words, but soon recovering himself, told her, that she knew not the real character of the persons she had been with; — that Bloomacre was one of the greatest libertines in the world; — that though she might agree to have a coach sent for, she could not be sure to what place it might carry her, and that he heard two of them, while the third was entertaining her, speak to each other in a manner which convinced him the most villainous contrivance was about to be practised on her.

A loud knocking at the door now interrupted their discourse; — both his lordship and his sister seemed terribly alarmed, — all the servants were called, and charge given not to open the door upon any account, — to bar up the lower windows, and to give answers from those above, to whoever was there. — The knocking continued with greater violence than it began, and miss Betsy heard the gentlemen's voices talking to the servants, and though she

she could not distinguish what they said, found there were very high words between them. My lord's sister ran into the hall to listen, then came back, crying, "O what terrible oaths! — I am afraid they will break open the door." — "No," replied lord ———, "it is too strong for that; — but I wish we had been so wise as to send for a constable." — One of the servants came down, and repeated what their young lady had said; adding, that the gentlemen swore they would not leave the place, till they had spoke with the lady, who they said had been trepanned into that house: — on this, "Suppose, my lord," said miss Betsy, "I go to the door, and tell them, that I will not go with them." — "No, madam," answered lord ———, "I cannot consent my door shall be opened to such ruffians; for, besides that they would certainly seize, and carry you off by force, I know not what mischief they might do my poor men, for having at first refused them entrance." — She then said, she would go up to the window, and answer them from thence; but he would not suffer her to be seen by them at all, and to keep her from insisting on it, told her a great many stories of rapes, and other mischiefs had been

been perpetrated by Bloomacre, and those he kept company with.

All this did not give *miss* Betsy those terrors, which it is very plain his lordship and sister endeavoured to inspire her with, yet would she say no more of appearing to the gentlemen, as she found he was so averse to it.

At length the knocking ceased, and one of the footmen came down, and said, that those who had given his lordship this disturbance had withdrawn from the door; and he believed were gone quite out of the cloisters; — but this intelligence did not satisfy lord ———; he either was, or pretended to be, in fear, that they were still skulking in some corner, and would rush in if they once saw the door opened. — There was still the same difficulty as ever, how *miss* Betsy should get home; — that is, how she should get safely out of the house, for the rain being over, the servants said they did not doubt but they should be able to procure a chair or coach: — after much debating on this matter, it was thus contrived.

Lord ——— had a window that looked into the yard of one of the prebendary's, — a footman was to go out of this window

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dow to the back door of that reverend divine, relate the whole story, and beg leave to go through his house:—this request being granted, the footman went, and returned in less than half an hour, with the welcome news, that a chair was ready, and waited in College-street.—Miss Betsey had no way of passing, but by the same the footman had done, which she easily did, by being lifted by my lord into the window, and descending from it by the help of some steps, placed on the other side by the servants of the prebendary.

It would be superfluous to trouble the reader with any speeches made by lord ——— and his sister to miss Betsey, or the replies she made to them; I shall only say, that passing through this house, and the College-garden, at the door of which the chair attended, she went into it, preceded by lord ———'s footman, muffled up in a cloak, and without a flambeau, to prevent being known, in case she should be met by Bloomacre, or either of his companions; and with this equipage she arrived safely at home, though not without a mind strangely perplexed at the meaning of this adventure.



C H A P.



CHAP. XXI.

Gives an explanation of the former, with other particulars, more agreeable to the reader in the repetition, than to the persons concerned in them.

IT was near ten o'clock when miss Betsy came home, and mr. Goodman, who had been very uneasy at her staying out so late, especially as she was alone, was equally rejoiced at her return; but, as well as lady Mellafin, was surprized on hearing by what accident she had been detained: — they knew not how to judge of it, — there was no circumstance in the whole affair, which could make them think mr. Bloomacre had any designs of that sort lord ——— had suggested; yet did mr. Goodman think himself obliged, as the young lady's guardian, to go to that gentleman, and have some talk with him concerning what had passed. — Accordingly he went the next morning to his house, but not finding him at home, left word with his servant, that he desired to speak with him as soon as possible: — he came not, however, the whole day, nor sent any message to excuse his
not

not doing so, and this neglect gave mr. Goodman, and miss Betsy herself, some room to suspect, he was no less guilty than he had been represented, since had he been perfectly innocent, it seemed reasonable to them, to think he would have come, even of his own accord, to have learned of miss Betsy the motive of her leaving him in so abrupt and odd a manner; — but how much they wronged him will presently appear, and they were afterwards convinced.

There was an implacable animosity between lord ——— and mr. Bloomacre, on account of the former's pretending a right to some lands which the other held, and could not be dispossessed of by law. — As his lordship knew mr. Bloomacre was not of a disposition to bear an affront tamely, he had no other way to vent his spleen against him, than by villifying and traducing him in all companies he came into; but this he took care to do in so artful a manner as to be enabled, either to evade or render what he said impossible to be proved, in case he were called to an account for it.

The affair of miss Betsy, innocent as it was, he thought gave him an excellent opportunity of gratifying his malice; — he

he went early the next morning to the dean, complained of an insult offered to his house by mr. Bloomacre, on the score of his sister having brought in a young lady, whom that gentleman had detained in the cloisters, and was going to carry off, by the assistance of some friends he had with him, in a hackney coach.

The dean, who was also a bishop, was extremely incensed, as well he might, at so glaring a prophanation of that sacred place, and the moment lord —— had taken his leave, sent for mr. Bloomacre to come to him. — That gentleman immediately, obeying the summons, the bishop began to reprimand him in terms, which the occasion seemed to require from a person of his function and authority : — mr. Bloomacre could not forbear interrupting him, though with the greatest respect, saying nothing could be more false and base, than such an accusation ; — that whoever had given such an information was a villain, and merited to be used as such. — The Prelate seeing him in this heat, would not mention the name of his accuser ; but replied coolly, that it was possible he might be wronged, but to convince him that he was so, he must relate to him the whole truth of the story, and on what grounds a conjecture so much to the
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the disadvantage of his reputation had been formed : — on which mr. Bloomacre repeated every thing that had passed ; and added, that he was well acquainted with the family where the young lady was boarded, and that he was certain she would appear in person to justify him in this point, if his lordship thought it proper ; — “ but,” said the bishop, “ I hear “ you affronted the lord ———, by “ thundering at his door, and abusing his “ servants.” — “ No, my lord,” answered mr. Bloomacre, “ lord ———, though “ far from being my friend, will not dare “ to alledge any such thing against me. “ — We were indeed a little surprized to “ see the young lady, who was with us, “ snatched away in so odd a fashion by “ his sister, who we easily perceived had “ not the least acquaintance with her. “ — We continued walking, however, in “ the cloister, till the man whom we “ had sent for a coach returned, and “ told us, he had got one, and that it “ waited at the gate. — We then, indeed, “ knocked at lord ———’s door, “ and being answered from the windows “ by the servants, in a very impertinent “ manner, I believe we might utter some “ words not very respectful, either of his “ lordship or his sister, whose behaviour “ in

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“ in this affair I am as yet intirely ignorant how to account for.”

The bishop paused a considerable time, but on mr. Bloomacre's repeating what he had said before, concerning bringing the lady herself to avouch the truth of what he had related to his lordship, replied, that there was no occasion for troubling either her or himself any farther ; — that he believed there had been some mistake in the business, and that he should think no more of it ; on which mr. Bloomacre took his leave.

Though the bishop had not mentioned the name of lord ——— to mr. Bloomacre, as the person who had brought this complaint against him, yet he was very certain, by all circumstances, that he could be indebted to no other for such a piece of low malice ; and this, joined to some other provocations he had received from the ill-will of that nobleman, made him resolve to do himself justice.

He went directly from the deanery in search of the two gentlemen, who had been with him in the abbey when he happened to meet miss Betsy, and having found them both, they went to a tavern together, in order to consult on what was proper

proper to be done, for the chastisement of lord ———'s folly and ill nature.

Both of them agreed with mr. Bloomacre, that he ought to demand that satisfaction, which every gentleman has a right to expect from any one who has injured him, of what degree soever he be, excepting those of royal blood. — Each of them was so eager to be his second in this affair, that they were obliged to draw lots for the determination of the choice; — he who had the ill-luck, as he called it, to draw the shortest cut, would needs oblige them to let him be the bearer of the challenge, that he might at least have some share in inflicting the punishment, which the behaviour of that unworthy lord so justly merited.

The challenge was wrote, — the place appointed for meeting was the field behind Montague house; but the gentleman who carried it brought no answer back, — his lordship telling him only that he would consider on the matter, and let mr. Bloomacre know his intentions.

Mr. Bloomacre as the principal, and the other as his second, were so enraged at this, that the latter resolved to go himself, and force a more categorical answer.

— H.

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—He did so, and lord ——— having had time to consult his brother, and, as it is said, some other friends, told him, he accepted the challenge, and would be ready with his second at the time and place appointed in it.

Mr. Bloomacre did not go home that whole day, therefore knew nothing of the message had been left for him by Mr. Goodman, till it was too late to comply with it; but this seeming remissness in him, was not all that troubled the mind of that open and honest-hearted guardian of Miss Betsy. — Mr. Truworth and Mr. Staple had both been at his house the day before: — the former on hearing his mistress was abroad, left only his compliments, and went away, though very much pressed to come in by Miss Flora, who seeing him through the parlour-window, ran to the door herself, and intreated he would pass the evening there; — Mr. Staple came the moment after, and met his rival coming down the steps that led up to the door; — Mr. Truworth saluted him in passing with the usual complaisance, which the other returned in a very cool manner, and knocked hastily at the door, “ I imagine,” said he to the footman who opened it, “ that Miss Betsy is
“ not at home, by that gentleman’s hav-
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“ ing so early taken leave ; but I would
 “ speak with mr. Goodman if he be at
 “ leisure.”

He was then shewed into the back parlour, which was the room where mr. Goodman generally received those persons who came to him upon business; — on hearing who it was that asked for him, he was a little surprized, and desired he would walk up stairs ; but mr. Staple not knowing but there might be company above, returned for answer, that he had no more than a word or two to say to him, and that must be in private ; on which the other immediately came down to him.

This young lover having by accident been informed, not only that mr. Trueworth made his addressees to miss Betsy, but also that it was with him she had been engaged during all that time he had been deprived of seeing her, thought it proper to talk with mr. Goodman, concerning this new obstacle to his wishes : — that worthy gentleman was extremely troubled to be questioned on an affair, on which he had given miss Betsy his word not to interfere, but finding himself very much pressed by a person whose passion he had encouraged, and who was the son of one
 with

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with whom he had lived in a long friendship, he frankly confessed to him, that mr. Truworth was indeed recommended to miss Betsy by her brother; — told him, he was sorry the thing had happened so, but had nothing farther to do with it; — that the young lady was at her own disposal, as to the article of marriage; — that he was ignorant how she would determine, and that it must be from herself alone he could learn what it was he might expect or hope.

Mr. Staple received little satisfaction from what mr. Goodman had said, but resolved to take his advice, and, if possible, bring miss Betsy to some eclaircissement of the fate he was to hope or fear. — Accordingly he came the next morning to visit her: — a liberty he had never taken, nor would now, if he had not despaired of finding her in an afternoon.

She gave herself, however, no airs of resentment on that account, but when he began to testify his discontent concerning mr. Truworth, and the apprehensions he had of his having gained the preference in her heart, though the last who had solicited that happiness, she replied, in the most haughty tone, that she was surprized at the freedom he took with her; — that

she was, and ever would be, mistress of her actions and sentiments, and no man had a right to pry into either; and concluded with saying, that she was sorry the civilities she had treated him with, should make him imagine he had a privilege of finding fault with those she shewed to others.

It is not to be doubted but that he made use of all the arguments in his power to convince her, that a true and perfect passion was never unaccompanied with jealous fears; — he acknowledged the merits of *mr. Truworth*; “but,” added he, “the more he is possessed of, the more dangerous is he to my hopes; — and then begged her to consider the torments he had suffered, while being so long deprived of her presence, and knowing, at the same time, a rival was blessed with it.

Miss Betsy was not at this time in a humour either to be persuaded by the reasons, or softened by the submissions of her lover, and poor *mr. Staple*, after having urged all that love, wit, despair, and grief could dictate, was obliged to depart more dissatisfied than he came.

In going out, he saw *mr. Goodman* in the parlour, who gave him the good morning as he passed; — “A sad one it has been to me,” answered he, with somewhat

of

of horror in his countenance ; “ but I
“ will not endure the rack of many such.
— With these words he flung out of the
house, in order to go about what perhaps
the reader is not at a loss to guess at.



CHAP. XXII.

*One duel began, and another fought in
the same morning, on miss Betsy's ac-
count, are here related, with the
manner in which the different anta-
gonists behaved to each other.*

WELL may the god of love be paint-
ed blind, — those devoted to his in-
fluence are seldom capable of seeing things
as they truly are ; — the smallest favour
elates them with imaginary hopes, and
the least coolness sinks them into despair ;
— their joys, — their griefs, — their fears
more frequently spring from ideal than
effective causes. — Mr. Staple judged not,
that miss Betsy refused to ease his jealous
apprehensions on the score of mr. True-
worth, because it was her natural temper
to give pain to those that loved her, but
because she had really an affection for that
gentleman ; — looking on himself there-
fore as now abandoned to all hope, rage
and revenge took the whole possession of

his soul, and chased away the softer emotions thence.

Having heard mr. Trueworth say he was lodged in Pall-Mall, he went to the Cocoa-Tree, and there informing himself of the particular house where his rival might be found, sat down, and wrote the following billet :

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

“ Sir,

“ BOTH our wishes tend to the possession of one beautiful object; —
 “ both cannot be happy in the accomplishment; — it is fit therefore the sword
 “ should decide the difference between us,
 “ and put an end to those pretensions on
 “ the one side or the other, which it is
 “ not probable either of us will otherwise
 “ recede from. — In confidence of
 “ your complying with this proposal, I
 “ shall attend you in the Green-Park,
 “ between the hours of seven and eight
 “ tomorrow morning; — as the affair
 “ concerns only ourselves, I think it both
 “ needless and unjust to engage any of
 “ our friends in it, so shall come alone, and
 “ expect you will do the same to, sir,

“ Your humble servant,

“ T. STAPLE.”

Mr.

Mr. Trueworth was at home, and, on receiving this, immediately, and without the least hesitation, wrote, and sent back by the same messenger, the following answer:

TO T. STAPLE, Esq;

“ *Sir,*

“ **T**HOUGH I cannot but think the
“ decision of our fate ought to be
“ left entirely to the lady herself, to whom,
“ whatever be the fortune of the sword, it
“ must at last be referred; yet as I can-
“ not, without being guilty of injustice
“ to my own honour and pretensions, re-
“ fuse you the satisfaction you require,
“ shall not fail to meet you at the time
“ and place mentioned in yours, till
“ when, I am, sir,

“ Your humble servant,

“ C. TRUEWORTH.”

By the stile of this letter it may be easily perceived, that mr. Trueworth was not very well pleased with this combat, though the greatness of his courage and spirit would not permit him to harbour the least thought of avoiding it; yet whatever his thoughts were on this occasion, he visited miss Betsy the same day, and discovered no part of them in his countenance, — his behaviour, on the contrary,

was rather more sprightly than usual; — he proposed to the two young ladies to go on some party of pleasure: — miss Betsy answered, with her accustomed freedom, that she should like it very well; but miss Flora, who had been for three or four days past very fullen and ill-humoured, said one minute she would go, and the next that she would not, and gave herself such odd and capricious airs, that miss Betsy told her, she believed her head was turned; to which the other replied, tartly, that if the distemper was catching, it would be no wonder she should be infected, having it always so near her. — Miss Betsy replied, that she knew no greater proof of madness, than to punish one's self in the hope of mortifying another; — “but that shall never be my case,” continued she, “as you will find.” — Then turning to mr. Trueworth, “if you will accept of my company, without miss Flora,” said she, laughing, “we will take a walk into the park.” — It is not to be doubted, but that the lover gladly embraced this opportunity of having his mistress to himself. — “’Tis like miss Betsy Thoughtless,” cried miss Flora, “and only like herself, to go abroad with a man alone.” — Miss Betsy regarded not this reproach, but catching up her fan and gloves,

gloves, gave mr. Truworth her hand to lead her where she had proposed, leaving the other so full of spite, that the tears gushed from her eyes.

'Tis likely the reader will be pretty much surprised, that miss Flora, who had always seemed more ready than even miss Betsy herself, to accept of invitations of the sort mr. Truworth had made, should now all at once become so averse; but his curiosity for an explanation of this matter must be for a while postponed, others, for which he may be equally impatient, requiring to be first discussed.

Two duels having been agreed upon to be fought on the same morning, the respect due to the quality of lord ———, demands we should give that wherein he was concerned the preference in the repetition.

The hour appointed being arrived, lord ——— and his brother came into the field, — mr. Bloomacre and his friend appeared immediately after. — “ You are “ the persons,” said lord ———, in an exulting tone, “ who made the invitation, “ but we are the first at table.” — “ 'Tis “ not yet past the time,” replied Bloomacre, looking on his watch, but the later we come the more eagerly we shall fall to. — In that instant all their swords

were drawn; but they had scarce time to exchange one thrust before a posse of constables, with their assistants, armed with staves and clubs, rushed in between them, beat down their weapons, and carried them all four to the house of the high-bailiff of Westminster.

That gentleman, by virtue of his office, made a strict examination into what had passed, and having heard what both parties had to say, severely reprimanded the one for having given the provocation, and the other for the manner in which it was resented; — he told them, he had a right, in order to preserve the peace of Westminster, and the liberties of it, to demand, that they should find sureties for their future behaviour, but in regard to their quality and character, he would insist on no more than their own word and honour, that the thing should be mutually forgot, and that nothing of the same kind, which now had been happily prevented, should hereafter be attempted.

Lord ——— submitted to this injunction with a great deal of readiness, and Mr. Bloomacre, seeing no other remedy, did the same, after which the high-bailiff obliged them to embrace, in token of the sincerity of their reconciliation.

Thus

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Thus ended an affair which had threatened such terrible consequences. — It made however a very great noise, and the discourse upon it was no way to the advantage of lord ———'s character, either for generosity or courage. — Let us now see the sequel of the challenge sent by mr. Staple to mr. Truworth.

These gentlemen met almost at the same time, in the place the challenger had appointed : — few words served to usher in the execution of the fatal purpose ; mr. Staple only said, “ Come on, sir, — “ love is the word, and miss Betsy “ Thoughtless be the victor's prize.” — With these words he drew his sword, — mr. Truworth also drew his, and standing on his defence, seeing the other was about to push, cried, — “ Hold, sir ! — “ your better fortune may triumph over “ my life, but never make me yield up “ my pretensions to that amiable lady : “ — if I fall, I die her martyr, and wish “ not to live but in the hope of serving “ her.” — These words making mr. Staple imagine, that his rival had indeed the greatest encouragement to hope every thing, added to the fury he was before possessed of, “ Die then her martyr,” said he, and running upon him with more force than skill, received a slight wound

in his own breast, while aiming at the other's heart.

It would be needless to mention all the particulars of this combat, — I shall only say, that the too great eagerness of mr. Staple gave the other an advantage over him, which must have been fatal to him from a less generous enemy ; but the temperate mr. Truworth seemed to take an equal care to avoid hurting his rival, as to avoid being hurt by him ; — seeing, however, that he was about to make a furious push at him, he ran in between, closed with him, and mr. Staple's foot happening to slip, he fell at full length upon the earth, his sword at the same time dropped out of his hand, which mr. Truworth took up. — “ The victory is “ yours,” cried he, “ take also my life, “ for I disdain to keep it.” — “ No,” replied mr. Truworth, “ I equally disdain to take an advantage, which meer “ chance has given me : — rise, sir, and “ let us finish the dispute between us, as “ become men of honour.” — With these words he returned him his sword. — “ I “ should be unworthy to be ranked among “ that number,” said mr. Staple, on receiving it, “ to employ this weapon “ against the breast, whose generosity re- “ stored it, were any thing but miss Betsey “ at

“ at stake ; — but what is life ! — what is
“ even honour, without the hope of her !
“ — I therefore accept your noble offer,
“ and death or conquest be my lot ! ”
— They renewed the engagement with
greater violence than before : — after se-
veral passes, all mr. Truworth’s dexterity
could not hinder him from receiving a
wound on his left side, but he gave the
other, at the same time, so deep a one in
his right arm, that it deprived him, in
an instant, of the power of continuing
the fight ; on which mr. Truworth drop-
ping the point of his sword, ran to him,
“ I am sorry, sir,” said he, “ for the ac-
“ cident has happened ; — I see you are
“ much hurt, — permit me to assist you
“ as well as I am able, and attend you
“ where proper care may be taken
“ of you.” — “ I do not deserve this
“ goodness,” answered mr. Staple, “ but
“ it is the will of heaven that you should
“ vanish every way.”

Mr. Truworth then seeing the blood
run quite down upon his hand, stripped
up the sleeve, and bound the wound from
which it issued, as tight as he could with
his handkerchief, after which they went
together to an eminent surgeon near Pic-
cadilly. — On examination of his wounds,
neither that in his arm, nor in his breast,
appeared

appeared to be at all dangerous, the flesh being only pierced, and no artery or tendon touched. — Mr. Truworth seemed only assiduous in his cares for the hurts he had given his rival without mentioning the least word of that, which he had received himself, 'till an elderly gentleman, who happened to be with the surgeon when they came in, and had all the time been present, perceiving some blood upon the side of his coat, a little above the hip, cried out, "Sir, you neglect yourself." — "I fear you have not escaped unhurt." — "A trifle," said Mr. Truworth, "a meer scratch, I believe; — 'tis time enough to think of that." — Nor would he suffer the surgeon, though he bled very fast, to come near him, 'till he had done with Mr. Staple. — It was, indeed, but a slight wound, which Mr. Truworth had received, though happening among a knot of veins, occasioned the effusion of a pretty deal of blood; for the stoppage of which the surgeon applied an immediate remedy, and told him, that it required little for a cure besides keeping it from air.

Mr. Staple, who had been deeply affected with the concern this generous enemy had expressed for him, was equally rejoiced at hearing the wound he had given him would be attended with no bad con-

consequences. — Every thing that was needful being done for both, the old gentleman prevailed upon them to go with him to a tavern a few doors off, having first obtained the surgeon's leave, who told him, a glass or two of wine could be of no prejudice to either.

This good-natured gentleman, who was called mr. Chatfree, used to come frequently to mr. Goodman's house, had some knowlege of mr. Staple, and though he was wholly unacquainted with mr. Truworth, conceived so great an esteem for him, from his behaviour towards the person he had fought with, that he thought he could not do a more meritorious action, than to reconcile to each other two such worthy persons. — What effect his endeavours, or rather their own nobleness of sentiments produced, shall presently be shewn.

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### C H A P. XXIII.

*Among other things necessary to be told, gives an account of the success of a plot laid by mr. Chatfree, for the discovery of miss Betsy's real inclinations.*

**T**HOUGH mr. Goodman had as yet no intimation of the accidents of that morning,

morning, yet was he extremely uneasy; — the looks, as well as words of mr. Staple, in going out of his house the day before, were continually in his mind, and he could not forbear apprehending some fatal consequence would, one time or other, attend the levity of miss Betsey's behaviour and conduct, in regard to her admirers: he was also both surprized and vexed, that mr. Bloomacre, from whom he expected an explanation of the Westminster-abbey adventure, had not come according to his request. — This last motive of his disquiet was, however, soon removed: mr. Bloomacre was no less impatient to clear himself of all blame concerning the transactions of that night, had no sooner finished his affair with lord ———, and was dismissed by the high-bailiff, than he came directly to mr. Goodman's, and recited to him, and all the ladies, the whole of what had passed.

Miss Betsey laughed prodigiously, but mr. Goodman shook his head, on hearing the particulars related by mr. Bloomacre, and, after that gentleman was gone, reproved, as he thought it his duty to do, the inconsiderateness of her conduct: — he told her, that as she was alone, she ought to have left the abbey as soon as divine service was ended; — that for a  
 person

person of her sex, age, and appearance, to walk in a place where there were always a great concourse of young sparks, who come for no other purpose than to make remarks upon the ladies, could not but be looked on as very odd by all who saw her. — “ There was no rain,” said he, “ till a long time after the service “ was ended, and you might then, in all “ probability, have got a chair ; — or, if “ not, the walk over the park could not “ have been a very great fatigue.”

Miss Betsy blushed extremely, not through a conscious shame of imagining what she had done deserved the least rebuke, but because her spirit, yet unbroke, could not bear controul : — she replied, that as she meant no ill, those who censured her were most in fault. — “ That “ is very true,” answered Mr. Goodman ; “ but, my dear child, you cannot but know “ it is a fault which too many in the “ world are guilty of. — I doubt not of “ your innocence, but would have you “ consider, that reputation is also of some “ value ; — that the honour of a young “ maid like you, is a flower of so tender “ and delicate a nature, that the least breath “ of scandal withers and destroys it. — “ In fine, that it is not enough to be “ good, without behaving in such a man-  
“ ner

“ner as shall make others acknowledge  
“us to be so.”

Miss Betsey had too much understanding not to be sensible what her guardian said, on this occasion, was perfectly just; and also, that he had a right to offer his advice, whenever her conduct rendered it necessary, but could not help being vexed, that any thing she did should be liable to censure, as she thought it merited none: — she made no further reply, however, to what Mr. Goodman said, though he continued his remonstrances, and probably would have gone on yet longer, if not interrupted by the coming in of Mr. Chatfree. — This gentleman having parted from the two wounded rivals came directly to Mr. Goodman's, in order to see how Miss Betsey would receive the intelligence he had to bring her.

After paying his compliments to Mr. Goodman, and the other ladies, he came toward Miss Betsey, and looking on her with a more than ordinary earnestness in his countenance, “Ah, madam!” said he, “I shall never hereafter see you without remembering what Cowley says of a lady  
“who might I suppose be like you:  
“So fatal, and withal so fair,  
“We're told destroying angels are.”

Though

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Though miss Betsy was not at that time in a humour to have any great relish for raillery, yet she could not forbear replying to what this old gentleman said, in the manner in which she imagined he spoke. — “ You are, at least, past the age of being destroyed by any weapons I carry about me,” cried she; — “ but pray what meaning have you in this terrible simile?” — “ My meaning is as terrible as the simile,” answered he; “ and though I believe you to be very much the favourite of heaven, I know not how you will atone for the mischief you have been the occasion of this morning; — but it may be,” continued he, “ you think it nothing that those murdering eyes of yours have set two gentlemen a fighting.”

Miss Betsy, supposing no other than that he had heard of the quarrel between Mr. Bloomacre and lord ———, replied merrily, “ Pray accuse my eyes of no such thing, — they are very innocent I assure you.” — “ Yes,” cried Mr. Goodman, and lady Mellafin at the same time, “ we can clear miss Betsy of this accusation.”

“ What!” rejoined Mr. Chatfree, hastily, “ was not Mr. Staple and Mr. Trueworth rivals for her love?” — “ Mr. Staple

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“ Staple and mr. Truworth,” said miss Betfy, in a good deal of consternation, “ pray what of them !” “ Oh ! the most inveterate duel,” answered he, “ they fought above half an hour, and poor mr. Staple is dead of his wounds.” — “ Dead !” cried miss Betfy, with a great scream. — lady Mellasin and miss Flora seemed very much alarmed ; but mr. Goodman was ready to sink from his chair, ’till mr. Chatfree, unseen by miss Betfy, winked upon him, in token that he was not in earnest in what he said.

The distraction in which this young lady now appeared, — the concern she expressed for mr. Staple, and her indignation against mr. Truworth, would have made any one think the former had much the preference in her esteem, ’till mr. Chatfree, after having listened to her exclamations on this score, cried out on a sudden, “ Ah, madam, what a mistake has the confusion I was involved in made me guilty of. — Alas ! I have deceived you, though without designing to do so, — mr. Staple lives, — it is mr. Truworth who has fallen a sacrifice to his unsuccessful passion for you.”

“ Truworth dead !” cried miss Betfy, “ O God ! — and does his murderer live  
“ to

“to triumph in the fall of the best and  
“most accomplished man on earth? —  
“Oh! may all the miseries, that heaven  
“and fortune can inflict, light on him!  
“— Is he not secured, mr. Chatfree? —  
“Will he not be hanged?

Mr. Chatfree could hold his countenance no longer, but bursting into a violent fit of laughter, “Ah, miss Betsy! —  
“miss Betsy!” said he, “I have caught  
“you? — Mr. Truworth I find then is  
“the happy man.” — “What do you  
“mean mr. Chatfree?” cried miss Betsy  
“very much amazed. — “I beg your  
“pardon,” answered he, “for the fright  
“I have put you in; but be comforted,  
“mr. Truworth is not dead I assure  
“you, and, I doubt not, lives as much  
“your slave as ever.” — “I do not care  
“what he is, if he is not dead,” said  
miss Betsy; “but pray for what end did  
“you invent this fine story?” — “Nay,  
“madam,” resumed he, “it is not al-  
“together my own inventing neither;  
“for mr. Truworth and mr. Staple have  
“had a duel this morning, and both of  
“them are wounded, though not so dan-  
“gerously as I pretended, merely to try,  
“by the concern you would express,  
“which of them you were most inclined  
“to



“ to favour, — and I have done it i’ faith,  
 “ — mr. Truworth is the man.”

Lady Mellasin, who had not spoke during all this conversation, now cried out, “ Aye, mr. Chatfree, we shall soon have a wedding, I believe.” — “ Believe, madam,” said he, “ why your ladyship may swear it; — for my part I will not give above a fortnight for the conclusion; — and I will venture to wish the fair bride joy on the occasion, for he is a fine gentleman, — a very fine gentleman indeed, and I think she could not have made a better choice.” With these words he wiped his mouth, and advanced to miss Betsey, in order to salute her; but pushing him scornfully back, “ None of your flights, good mr. Chatfree,” said she, “ if I thought you were in earnest, I would never see the face of mr. Truworth more.”

This did not hinder the pleasant old gentleman from continuing his raillery; — he plainly told miss Betsey that she was in love, — that he saw the marks of it upon her, and that it was in vain for her to deny it. — Lady Mellasin laughed very heartily to see the fret miss Betsey was in, at hearing mr. Chatfree talk in this manner; but miss Flora, to whom one would  
 imagine

imagine this scene would have been diverting enough, never opened her lips to utter one syllable; but made such grimaces, as had they been taken notice of, would have shewn how little she was pleased with it.

Mr. Goodman had been so much struck with the first account given by Mr. Chatfree, that he was not to be roused by any thing that gentleman said afterwards; — he reflected, that though the consequences of the rencounter between the two rivals had been less fatal than he had been made to imagine, yet it might have happened, and indeed been naturally expected; he could not therefore forbear interrupting his friend's mirth, by remonstrating to Miss Betsy, in the most serious terms, the great error she was guilty of, in encouraging a plurality of lovers at the same time: — he told her, that gentlemen of Mr. Trueworth's and Mr. Staple's character and fortune, ought not to be trifled with, “Suppose,” said he, “that one or both of them had indeed been killed, how could you have answered to yourself, or to the world, the having been the sad occasion?”

“Lord, sir,” replied Miss Betsy, walking up and down the room in a good deal

deal of agitation, — “ what would you  
 “ have me do? — I do not want the men  
 “ to love me, — and if they will play  
 “ the fool and fight, and kill one ano-  
 “ ther, it is none of my fault.”

In fine, between mr. Chatfree’s raillery,  
 and mr. Goodman’s admonitions, this  
 poor young lady was teized beyond all  
 patience, and finding it impossible to put  
 a stop to either, she flew out of the room,  
 ready to cry with vexation.

She was no sooner gone, than mr.  
 Goodman took mr. Chatfree into his clo-  
 set, and having learned from him all the  
 particulars of the late duel, and consulted  
 with him what was proper to be done to  
 prevent any farther mischief of the like  
 sort, they went together to mr. Staple’s  
 lodging, in order to use their utmost en-  
 deavours to prevail on that gentleman to  
 desist the prosecution of his addresses to  
 miss Betsy.

*END of the FIRST VOLUME.*









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